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Communication and the Role of the Lord in Amos

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Communication and the Role of the Lord in Amos

Their Development and Their Implications for the Text-Immanent Reader

Bincy Thomas Thumpanathu

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Communication and the Role of the Lord in Amos

Their Development and Their Implications for the Text-Immanent Reader

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PREFACE

The book of Amos, consisting of just nine chapters, is widely considered to be a catalogue of social justice policies and of divine judgements. It is not only a litany of condemnations of injustices and iniquities, and also of false pieties, practised by Israel, but it is ultimately a message of hope. As Amos' mission is first and foremost to exhort, communication is necessarily involved. The communicative elements in the book, both internal and external, are of considerable interest throughout, with the utterances of the Lord being especially significant. Undertaking my PhD at Tilburg University, I have completed a text-linguistic analysis of the development of the communication in the book of Amos with a special focus on the role of the Lord and its implications for the text-immanent reader. I wish to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the many people who supported me in bringing this work to fruition.

I humbly acknowledge the grace of Almighty God, which enabled me to complete this dissertation: אֲבָרֶךְ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר יִעֲצָנִי (*I will bless the LORD, who has given me counsel* Ps 16:7). With a deep sense of gratitude, I remember my supervisors Prof. Dr. Archibald van Wieringen and Prof. Dr. Bart Koet. I am deeply indebted to them for their encouragement, personal attention and sincere efforts in guiding my work. Every part of this dissertation has been enriched by their scholarly and insightful suggestions. I also sincerely thank the members of the PhD Committee, Prof. Dr. H.G.L. Peels, Prof. Dr W.T. van Peursen, Prof. Dr. C.H.C.M. Vander Stichele and Dr. G. Edayadiyil, for their constructive remarks and invaluable suggestions.

I gratefully acknowledge the excellent academic atmosphere at Tilburg University. I would like to offer a special note of thanks regarding both the teaching staff and ancillary staff of the Faculty of Theology. I am particularly grateful to the Dean, Prof. Dr. Marcel Sarot, and the Executive Director, Drs. Ada van der Velden-Westervelt, for their great care and concern. Sincere thanks is due to the Board Members of the *Adrianus Fonds* and the *L.J. Maria Stichting* for their gracious support of my studies in Tilburg. A special word of thanks is due to Drs. Maurits J. Sinninghe Damsté for proofreading and correcting the text. I wish

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I am indebted to the Mother General of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC), the Provincial Superior and Council Team of Ernakulam province (Kerala, India) and all the members of the CMC congregation for their generous support. I sincerely thank the CMC sisters in Heidelberg (Germany), and the Heidelberg Parish for their invaluable help and concern. I extend a very special word of gratitude to the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) of the Dutch province and especially their Tilburg community for making my stay in Tilburg such a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

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Bincy Thomas Thumpanathu CMC

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are taken from *The SBL Handbook of Style: Second Edition: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*.

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>ABR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AcBib	Academia Biblica
<i>AcT</i>	<i>Acta Theologica</i>
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs/Monografías sobre el Antiquo Cercano Oriente
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>AuOr</i>	<i>Aula Orientalis</i>
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
<i>BO</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary

CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>CBTJ</i>	<i>Calvary Baptist Theological Journal</i>
<i>Colloq</i>	<i>Colloquium</i>
<i>CTM</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
<i>CTQ</i>	<i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>CurR</i>	<i>Currents in Research</i>
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
<i>ETS</i>	<i>Erfurter theologische Studien</i>
<i>ExAud</i>	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HAR	Hebrew Annual Review
<i>Hor</i>	<i>Horizons</i>
<i>HS</i>	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
ISBL	Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>

<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JHebS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JSem</i>	<i>Journal of Semitics</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSAWS	Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
NAC	New American Commentary
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Old Testament Studies
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
<i>PAAJR</i>	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevistT</i>	<i>Revista Theos</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SEÅ</i>	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
<i>Sef</i>	<i>Sefarad</i>

SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
SymS	Symposium Series
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VE</i>	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE

The book of Amos, the third in the order of the twelve minor prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible, remains an attractive option for the purpose of academic pursuit. The existence of a large amount of literature on the book demonstrates the systematic and scientific research into its composition, growth and coherence.¹ Consequently, various theological and social themes, such as social justice and the restoration of the downtrodden envisaged in this book, have been subjects of thorough study.² It is true that time and again these themes come to prominence in situations where injustice and the exploitation of the poor prevail.³ Nevertheless, the book of Amos is not only a manifesto of social justice and divine judgement, as is widely accepted, but the communication in the book goes far beyond this and is captivating. The convincing manner in which the various communicative elements are presented, along with the powerful communication between the characters, support this fact.⁴

¹ For example, see Aaron W. Park, *The Book of Amos as Composed and Read in Antiquity*, SBL 37 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001); Tchavdar S. Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, BZAW 393 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009); Graham R. Hamborg, *Still Selling the Righteous: A Redaction-Critical Investigation of Reasons for Judgment in Amos 2:6–16*, LHBOTS 555 (New York: T&T Clark, 2012).

² See Walter J. Houston, *Amos: Justice and Violence*, T&T Clark Study Guides to the Old Testament 26 (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 33–52; Daniel Timmer, “The Use and Abuse of Power in Amos: Identity and Ideology,” *JSOT* 39 (2014): 101–18; Ferry Yefta Mamahit, “Establish Justice in the Land: Rhetoric and Theology of Social Justice in the Book of Amos” (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2010); Fred Guyette, “Amos the Prophet: A Meditation on the Richness of ‘Justice’,” *JBQ* 36 (2008): 15–21; Nnamdi Isidore Obi, “Amos’ Cry for Social Justice: The Relevance of an Old Testament Prophet in the 21st Century” (PhD diss., K. U. Leuven, 2005); Bernhard Lang, “The Social Organization of Peasant Poverty in Biblical Israel,” *JSOT* 7 (1982): 47–63.

³ For example, see Patrick Kofi Amissah, “Justice and Righteousness in the Prophecy of Amos and Their Relevance to Issues of Contemporary Social Justice in the Church in Ghana” (PhD diss., King’s College London, 2016), 93–174; Thomas Vadackumkara Saviour, “Socio-Critical Sayings of Amos: A Contextualized Interpretation Focusing on Implications for Theological Social Ethics” (PhD diss., der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 2012), 217–57; Timothy Agboluaje, “The Ministry of Amos in Israel and Its Socio-Religious Implication for the Nigerian Society,” *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* XI (2006): 1–10; Alec Hill, “Let Justice Flow Like a River: International Business and the Book of Amos,” *JBIB* 7 (2001): 64–82; Hershey H. Friedman, “Messages from the Ancient Prophets: Lessons for Today,” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 20 (2011): 298–303.

⁴ For example, see Karl Möller, *A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos*, JSOTSup 372 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003). Möller focuses on the discussion between the prophet Amos and his eighth-century hearers and explores how the prophet convinces his listeners regarding the

For example:

(i) The book of Amos is characterised by numerous direct speeches: (a) between the Lord and the people of Israel (2:10–16; 3:2; 4:4–12; 5:4–5, 16–17, 21–27; 6:8, 14), (b) between the prophet and the people of Israel (3:1; 4:1–3, 13; 5:1–3, 6, 8–9, 14–15, 18–20; 6:1–2), (c) between the Lord and the prophet Amos (3:9, 13–15; 7:2–3, 5–6, 8–9; 8:2–3) and (d) between the prophet Amos and Amaziah (7:12–17). The multiple direct speeches found throughout the book indicate the relevance of communication within it.

(ii) The book begins with the Lord's judgements regarding a number of nations (1:3–2:3). What is of note is that none of them is addressed while the punishment is being proclaimed. The question then arises as to whom the communication about these nations is directed? Thus, the communicative aspect becomes a relevant part of the study.

(iii) The varied way in which the communiqué is presented in the book is notable: (a) the image of the Lord portrayed in the beginning, is of one with a roaring and raised voice (1:2) that moves on with a great number of divine warnings and the swearing of divine oaths, threatening destruction. However, the book concludes in a completely different manner, because all of a sudden there is an assurance of restoration given by the Lord (9:11–15). (b) Likewise, a dynamic tension is noticeable in the pronouncements of the prophet Amos. On the one hand, he announces the divine judgements as being inexorable and unavoidable, but on the other, he exhorts (5:6, 14), intercedes (7:2, 5) and hopes that perhaps the Lord will be gracious and show his favour (5:14, 15). (c) Similarly, the prophet beautifully presents the deep relationship between the Lord and his people (2:10; 3:1). Surprisingly, he also presents their relationship in a confused way, stating that the Lord completely rejects their sacrifices (4:5; 5:21–23), and predicts exile (4:3; 5:27; 6:7; 7:11, 17). These changing attitudes and

imminent divine punishment. Jason Radine views the book of Amos as a religio-political document that gives reasons for and justifies the divine punishment, see Jason Radine, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah*, FAT 45 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). A recent commentary on the book of Amos by Göran Eidevall also analyses this book as a literary composition and brings to fore the structure and meaning of the text, see Göran Eidevall, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 24G (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2017). To view the different communication layers in the book of Amos, see Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, "The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15," *EstBib* LXXI (2013): 7–19; Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, "Communicatiegeoriënteerde Exegese en Tekstuele Identiteit: Geïllustreerd aan het Boek Amos," in *Theologie & Methode*, ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, Theologische Perspectieven Supplement Series 4 (Bergambacht: 2VM Uitgeverij, 2012), 3–46.

activities presented in the text draw attention to the communication perspective contained within it.⁵

(iv) The divine speech formulas (52 times in the book of Amos), satires or ridicules (3:12; 5:4–5; 7:14), chiasms (4:7–8, 13; 5:1–17, 24), lamentations and woe announcements (5:18–20; 6:1–2), divine oaths (4:2; 6:8; 8:7), rhetorical questions (3:3–8; 6:12), shrewd questions (2:10–11; 3:8; 5:18–20, 25; 6:2–3; 7:7–9; 8:1–2; 9:7), recurring statements (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11), a series of visions and dialogues (7:1–3, 4–6, 7–9; 8:1–3; 9:1–4), three divine descriptions (4:13; 5:8–9; 9:5–6) and the rhetorical structures and strategies inherent in the direct speeches enhance the communication technique in the book.⁶

The above-mentioned aspects of the book greatly emphasize the elements of communication. Taking these into consideration, the purpose of this thesis is: (i) to study the communication in Amos and (ii) to ascertain the development in the communicative role of the Lord and the position of the text-immanent reader as it occurs in the book.⁷

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

The present dissertation entitled “Communication and the Role of the Lord in Amos: Their Development and Their Implications for the Text-Immanent Reader” is a communication-

⁵ Cf. Erhard S. Gerstenberger, “Modes of Communication with the Divine in the Hebrew Psalter,” in *Mediating between Heaven and Earth: Communication with the Divine in the Ancient Near East*, ed. C. L. Crouch, Jonathan Stökl and Anna Elise Zerneck, LHBOTS 566 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 93–113.

⁶ There is an amount of literature that details the impressive characteristics of the communication in the book of Amos and that shows the importance of communication gained. For example, see Robert P. Carroll, “Is Humour Also Among the Prophets?” in *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Yehuda T. Radday and Athalya Brenner, JSOTSup 92 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 178; Åke Viberg, “Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony,” *TynBul* 47.1 (1996): 91–114; Richard J. Clifford, “Shorter Communications: The Use of Hoy in the Prophets,” *CBQ* 28 (1966): 458–64; Joyce Rilett Wood, “Tragic and Comic Forms in Amos,” *BibInt* 6 (1998): 20–48; William Domeris, “Shades of Irony in the Anti-Language of Amos,” *HTS Teologiese Studies* 72 (2016): 1–8; Jason H. Radine, ““Hear this Word that I Take Up Over You in Lamentation” (Amos 5:1): Lamentation Themes in the Book of Amos,” in *Why? How Long?: Studies on Voice(s) of Lamentation Rooted in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Carol J. Dempsey, LeAnn Snow Flesher and Mark J. Boda, LHBOTS 552 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 1–16; Carolyn J. Sharp, *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible*, ISBL (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 151–69; Stephen J. Bramer, “Analysis of the Structure of Amos,” *BSac* 156 (1999): 160–74.

⁷ Longacre ascertains that “while a discourse has cohesion/coherence and prominence, it just as necessarily involves *progress*, i.e., a well formed discourse is going somewhere. The progress of a discourse typically issues in some sort of climatic development (or developments).” See Robert E. Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse*, Topics in Language and Linguistics, 2nd ed. (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 33.

oriented text-linguistic analysis of the book of Amos with special focus on the development in the role of the character Lord⁸ and the implications for the text-immanent reader.

The research question is formulated as follows:

- How profound and persuasive are the communication layers in the book of Amos in relation to the role of the Lord and what is the position of the text-immanent reader in this communication?

This will further lead to the examination of some of the details of the communication found in the book and consequently the research question will be discussed on different levels:

➤ First, regarding the text-linguistic approach:

- How do the text-syntactic, text-semantic and text-pragmatic analyses explore the communication in the book of Amos and contribute to the research into the role of the Lord?
- What is communicated by the Lord, to the Lord and about the Lord in the text?

➤ Second, regarding the text-internal communication:

- What is communicated between:
 - (a) the Lord and other characters in the text? How does their relationship progress?
 - (b) the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader? How does their relationship progress?

Having formulated the research questions, the methodology adopted in the formulation of this dissertation will be discussed in the next section.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The increasing use of diverse scientific procedures borrowed from the historical and literary [or a-historical] disciplines have enormously contributed to the biblical exegesis. The present research, that aims to examine the development in the role of the Lord from a communication perspective, is a literary study of the book of Amos. Therefore, the first

⁸ The book of Amos uses various names for the character Lord, such as, יהוה (*LORD*) [52 times], אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה (*Lord GOD*) [19 times], אֱלֹהִים (*GOD*) [3 times], אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְבָּאוֹת (*Lord GOD, the God of hosts*) [1 time], יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק (*LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD*) [1 time], and יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק (*LORD, the God of hosts*) [7 times]. Since in the majority of cases the term יהוה (*LORD*) occurs, while in the remainder it is incorporated into the name, it has been decided to use the term 'the Lord' when referring to God.

phase of the dissertation focuses on a literary, namely text-linguistic analysis of the nine chapters in the book. The second phase focuses on a communication-oriented analysis. A detailed account of these two approaches follows.

1.3.1 The Text-Linguistic Analysis

It is true to say that “language is made up of a hierarchy of levels. Sounds, words and word elements, and phrases and clauses are successively more complex levels.”⁹ Consequently a text-linguistic study is desirable in the Hebrew Bible exegesis.¹⁰ Since the aim of this dissertation is to enter into a thorough study of the communication in the book of Amos with special emphasis on the development in the communicative role of the Lord,¹¹ a textual analysis is essential.¹² Added to that, the communication-oriented analysis in the second phase will also be undertaken from a textual point of view. The textual analysis will be conducted in three phases: syntax, semantics and pragmatics.¹³ Though there are clear distinctions between these three phases, they are interlinked. Moreover, the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic studies are completely text-bound and therefore, more precisely, it

⁹ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 49.

¹⁰ Michael Aubrey, “The Value of Linguistically Informed Exegesis,” in *Linguistics & Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Douglas Mangum and Josh Westbury, Lexham Methods Series 2 (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2017), 151–58; Robert de Beaugrande, “Text Linguistics,” in *Discursive Pragmatics*, Handbook of Pragmatics Highlights 8, ed. Jan Zienkowski, Jan-Ola Östman and Jef Verschueren (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2011), 286–96; Ellen J. van Wolde, “Linguistic Motivation and Biblical Exegesis,” in *Narrative Syntax and the Hebrew Bible: Papers of the Tilburg Conference 1996*, ed. Ellen J. van Wolde, BibInt 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1997; repr., Boston: Brill, 2002), 21–47.

¹¹ For a study of the book of Amos that follows the communication theoretical approach, however, from a rhetorical point of view, see Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*.

¹² “Concentrating on the text as it is, always is a good starting point for textual analysis.” See Eep Talstra and Christo H. J. van der Merwe, “Analysis, Retrieval and the Demand for More Data. Integrating the Results of a Formal Textlinguistic and Cognitive Based Pragmatic Approach to the Analysis of Deut 4:1–40,” in *Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference. Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique “From alpha to byte.” University of Stellenbosch 17–21 July, 2000*, ed. Johann Cook (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 43.

¹³ Charles W. Morris, *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, International Encyclopaedia of Unified Science 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938) puts forward for consideration a general semiotic theory construction in these three – syntax, semantics and pragmatics – sub-disciplines. See also Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington; London: Indiana University Press, 1979), 11; Peter Cole, ed., *Pragmatics, Syntax and Semantics* 9 (New York: Academic Press, 1978). Cf. Cynthia L. Miller, “Discourse Functions of Quotative Frames in Biblical Hebrew Narrative,” in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What It Is and What It Offers*, ed. Walter R. Bodine, SemeiaSt (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 155–82.

can be called an analysis based on text-syntax, text-semantics and text-pragmatics.¹⁴

Before explaining the application of these analyses, a few words of explanation on these three steps and their order are worth mentioning.

“‘Syntax’ comes from the Greek word *syntaxis* (*syntaxis*, “ordering together”), and it is the study of how a language arranges its words into phrases, clauses and sentences.”¹⁵ Moreover, in the process of communication, these linguistic forms have a major role with the syntax providing a description of the linguistic forms. Syntax can be elaborated as “the description of the linguistic forms that conduct the process of communication.”¹⁶ While the linguistic forms are the formal properties of a language, syntax is the preliminary tool used in describing those linguistic forms. Thus the linguistic forms should be analysed according to their function.¹⁷ This way, semantics can play its role and give meaning to these linguistic structural relations. Therefore, knowledge of the grammatical structures and structural elements is a prior requirement for any meaningful articulation of the scriptural pericope, which occurs at the second stage. Hence, it is appropriate to suggest that text-semantics cannot come about independently of text-syntax. In other words, text-semantics describes the literary connections in a text based on syntax, literary forms, terminology and the close study of phrases and forms. This approach facilitates a coherent reading of the text. It is to be noted that this comprehensive reading is meaningful only in a communicative-setting. Therefore, the linguistic elements that offer the possibility of deriving meaning from the text are to be applied in the pragmatic phase as well.¹⁸ Consequently, the communicative developments in the text are influenced by both syntax and semantics.¹⁹

The above-mentioned three phases form the following three meaningful linear steps; the linguistic and morphological form, the subject matter and the elements of communication.

¹⁴ Harald Weinrich, *Sprache in Texten* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1976), 11–20; Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, “The Reader in Genesis in 22:1–19: Textsyntax – Textsemantics – Textpragmatics,” *EstBib* 53 (1995): 290.

¹⁵ Wendy Widder, “Linguistic Fundamentals,” in Mangu and Westbury, *Linguistics & Biblical Exegesis*, 48.

¹⁶ The linguistic study by Eep Talstra on the basis of Hebrew grammar and the Hebrew Bible are helpful in regard to the syntactic analysis. Eep Talstra, “Text Grammar and Hebrew Bible. I: Elements of a Theory,” *BO* 35 (1978): 169.

¹⁷ Talstra, “Text Grammar and Hebrew Bible. I,” 169.

¹⁸ To better understand pragmatics, see Jeremy Thompson and Wendy Widder, “Language in Use,” in Mangu and Westbury, *Linguistics & Biblical Exegesis*, 57–65.

¹⁹ Mira Ariel explains the contact points between discourse and grammar and firmly states that discourse and grammar go hand in hand and often complement each other. She uses the analogy of a horse and carriage in this regard. See Mira Ariel, “Discourse, Grammar, Discourse,” *Discourse Studies* 11 (2009): 6.

Expressed differently, as Archibald van Wieringen observes, syntax is the hard material of the text, namely, the ‘skeleton’, whereas semantics is the soft material of the text, specifically, ‘the muscles and flesh’ on that skeleton²⁰ and finally, pragmatics is the ‘lungs.’ Any text requires a combination of all these three elements and a failure in this regard will result in a flawed composition of the text. In brief, the text requires grammar (syntax), meaning (semantics) and a communication-setting (pragmatics) for coherent and intelligible text-communication.²¹ Syntax initially explores the language structures, semantics gives meaning to these structural relations, and finally this meaning becomes intelligible at the pragmatic level.²² The grammar of the text can therefore be enriched by the meaning and can shed further light upon the communicative elements in the text. Thus, all these three aspects complement each other and knit the text together in all its dimensions and dynamics.

The application of these three steps in the analysis of Amos is explained in the next section.

1.3.1.1 Application: text-syntax

The syntactic analysis will be conducted in the following way:

- Delineation of the textual units: the entire text consists of nine chapters in the Hebrew Bible,²³ each of which will be divided into different pericopes to facilitate detailed reading and comprehension leading to a more meaningful analysis of the text. The delineation is based on various grammatical factors.
- Division of the textual unit into clauses: from a grammatical point of view, a clause is a sentence or part of a sentence with just one single predicate. Thus, “a new clause begins at every finite verb, unless the finite verb is preceded by a conjunction.”²⁴ The clauses are classified as follows: verbal clause (VC) – a clause that begins with a verb; nominal clause

²⁰ van Wieringen, “The Reader in Genesis in 22:1–19,” 291.

²¹ Ellen van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 361–62.

²² For the crossing point of syntax, semantics and pragmatics, see Cynthia L. Miller, “Introducing Direct Discourse in Biblical Hebrew Narrative,” in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. Robert D. Bergen (Dallas: SIL International; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 218.

²³ *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) is used to refer to the Hebrew Bible in the thesis. See Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983).

²⁴ A. J. C. Verheij and Eep Talstra, “Crunching Participles: An Aspect of Computer Assisted Syntactical Analysis Demonstrated on Isaiah 1–12,” in *A Prophet on the Screen: Computerised Description and Literary Interpretation of Isaianic Texts*, ed. Eep Talstra and Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1992), 22.

(NC) – a clause that begins with a noun; and complex nominal clause (CNC) – clause that is generated when the nominal predicate of a NC is substituted by either a VC or a NC.²⁵ At the preliminary stage, the pericope is divided into clauses. The purpose of this exercise is not to break the coherence of the unit, but to closely observe the syntactic status of each and every clause, and also to learn how they are related or unrelated to one another in order to have a more meaningful reading experience.²⁶

- Construction of the hook-system:²⁷ the numerous clauses in the text are sketched and connected in the framework of a hook-system. This layout is binary, which implies that there cannot be more than two elements in one hook. The hook becomes larger as the number of units increases at every successive level through the combination of clauses. In the syntax diagram, a hook with single lines indicates indirect speech and a hook with double lines indicates direct speech.
- Formulation of the English translation: the translation of the text of Amos from the Hebrew is provided for examination.²⁸
- Syntactic analysis: various grammatical elements are taken into consideration when the textual analysis is conducted. In this examination, particular attention is paid to factors such as tense, person, verbal links, congruence in number and gender and their various functions in the text.²⁹ Having a knowledge of the verbal forms and constructions used is

²⁵ Wolfgang Schneider, *Grammatik des Biblischen Hebräisch: Ein Lehrbuch* (München: Claudius, 1982; 2001; 2007), 153–63; Eep Talstra, “Text Grammar and Hebrew Bible. I,” 169–70; A. J. C. Verheij and Eep Talstra, “Crunching Participles,” 22–24.

²⁶ For a variety of clause and interclause relationships, see Francis I. Andersen, “Salience, Implicature, Ambiguity and Redundancy in Clause-Clause Relationships in Biblical Hebrew,” in Bergen, *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, 99–104.

²⁷ For this kind of layout for showing texts on syntactic grounds see H. Leene, “Unripe Fruit and Dull Teeth (Jer 31.29; Ez 18.2),” in *Narrative and Comment: Contributions to Grammar and Discourse Biblical Hebrew: Presented to Wolfgang Schneider*, ed. Eep Talstra (Amsterdam: Societas Hebraica Amstelodamensis, 1995), 84; Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, “Isaiah 12,1–6: A Domain and Communication Analysis,” in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A.M. Beuken*, ed. Jacques van Ruiten and Marc Vervenne, BETL 132 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 150–51; P. Lugtigheid, “The Notion of the City in Isaiah 44:21–46:13,” in “*Enlarge the Site of Your Tent*”: *The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah*, ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude, OTS 58 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 123–25, 141–42, 147–48.

²⁸ Unless otherwise stated, the biblical words, terms and verses used in this dissertation are taken from the English translation which I have prepared.

²⁹ See Alviero Niccacci, “On the Hebrew Verbal System,” in Bergen, *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, 117–37.

beneficial when determining whether a clause belongs to the narrative or to the discursive world of the text and whether it is in the foreground or in the background.³⁰

1.3.1.2 Application: text-semantics

Having examined the structural relations through the syntactic study, the semantic study explores the meaning of the text.³¹ There are several ways of entering the text and of revealing the hidden sense within it. The various semantic techniques applied in the current study, such as, word-repetitions, synonyms, antonyms, parallelisms, antitheses, word-pairs, semantic-fields and figurative language, assist in forming broader semantic lines, in order to search out the meaning of the text.

Words are used repeatedly in the text in order to establish a deeper relation between these words, a strategy which serves to further illuminate the sense of the sentences. Hence, finding the repeated words in the pericope concerned and understanding the purpose of these repetitions will facilitate a better understanding of the text. Also, synonyms and antonyms greatly contribute to answering questions about the meaning of the text. For synonymity, the meanings of words must be identical in all contexts. Antonyms are words that opposed in meaning.³² Likewise, parallelisms³³ and antitheses³⁴ also have semantic objectives and therefore, it is interesting to discover the semantic goal inherent and aimed at in the text through the use of these techniques. Concerning word-pairs, Yitzhak Avishur demonstrates: “the term “word pairs” as used in this study, will be defined as pairs of synonymous, antonymous, or heteronymous words, whose components are found in tandem as result of

³⁰ In this regard, a recent study conducted by Gino Johnny Kalkman provides a detailed account of the theory of Hebrew verbs and introduces the pioneers of text-linguistic approaches to the Hebrew Bible. See Gino Johnny Kalkman, *Verbal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Poetry: Poetic Freedom or Linguistic System?* (’s-Hertogenbosch, NL: Box Press, 2015), 71–109.

³¹ See the discussion on the semantic domains by Reinier de Blois. He explains that the semantic framework evolves through the structural semantic analysis. Reinier de Blois, “Semantic Domains for Biblical Hebrew,” in Cook, *Bible and Computer*, 209–29.

³² Stephen Shead, *Radical Frame Semantics and Biblical Hebrew: Exploring Lexical Semantics*, BibInt 108 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 16–18, 20–21.

³³ The agreement of one clause or verse with another. Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, rev. and enl. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). From a linguistic perspective she investigates the extent of biblical parallelism.

³⁴ Bringing about a contrasting effect by putting two opposite ideas together. A significant survey of the discussion about the antithetic structure in biblical Hebrew poetry and the prophetic literature is offered by Jože Krašovec. See Jože Krašovec, *Antithetic Structure in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, VTSup 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1984). See also Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse*, 55–59. Using examples, the author shows how wide and multifaceted the phenomenon of contrast is.

mutual affinity; at least twice in one language, or once in two different Semitic languages.”³⁵ The semantic-field technique will also enhance the comprehension as it deals with a collection of words that belong to each other.³⁶ When words of similar import are grouped within a semantic-field, they contribute to the meaning as well.³⁷ Apart from these aspects, extracting the required knowledge from the figurative language used³⁸ in the book of Amos is also part of the semantic study aimed at in this research.

- Having marked the grammatical components in the text, and aided by the above mentioned semantic techniques, the semantic analysis of Amos will be conducted. However, the analysis does not aim to find the meaning of each and every word or clause separately. In other words, an analysis of words taken in isolation, does not form part of this study.
- The interpretation of the text is based on the broader semantic lines and issues, while at all times, keeping a clear focus on the character Lord. The communicative thrust in the text is maintained by asking the question of how the Lord relates to these semantic lines.
- The application of the semantic techniques described above will help to identify the meaningful semantic units in the text. Therefore, the book of Amos is thoroughly examined to explore the true meaning inherent in the text by means of finding word-repetitions and realising how they emphasise or enhance the meaning, by differentiating between both parallel and antithetical ideas, by finding word-pairs, by examining the semantic fields and by finding the figures of speech that are predominantly used in the text.

³⁵ For a discussion on word-pairs in biblical literature, see Yitzhak Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures*, eds. Kurt Bergerhof, Manfred Dietrich, and Oswald Loretz, AOAT 210 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 1.

³⁶ Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, “Relecture of Biblical Psalms: A Computer Aided Analysis of Textual Relations Based on Semantic Domains,” in Cook, *Bible and Computer*, 311–13.

³⁷ Shead, *Radical Frame Semantics and Biblical Hebrew*, 25–32.

³⁸ Ethelbert William Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1898). The various classes of figures of speeches with Biblical examples are explained here. See also Manfred Kienpointner, “Figures of Speech,” in Zienkowski, Östman and Verschueren, *Discursive Pragmatics*, 102–15.

1.3.1.3 Application: text-pragmatics

The third step, namely the text-pragmatics, focuses on the communicative dimensions and is an attempt to deepen the meaning by uncovering the communicative factors inherent in the text.³⁹ Thus the major concerns of the pragmatic analysis are:

- The exploration of the communicative function by using the linguistic signs and semantic results rather than examining the motives of the speaker.
- Identifying who is speaking (the speaker) and to whom (the addressee/s), as well as the time of speaking.⁴⁰
- The communication taking place at the characters' level, how the characters are addressed, how they respond to the message communicated, and how their responses affect the communication.
- The communication between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader also needs attention. The search for the role and position of the text-immanent reader is a useful exercise as through him the real reader could possibly communicate with the text.⁴¹

1.3.2 The Communication-Oriented Analysis

Together with the above-mentioned three phases of text-linguistic analysis, a communication-oriented analysis is applied, with the intention of uncovering how the text-

³⁹ For instance, see Jon-K. Adams, *Pragmatics and Fiction*, Pragmatics & Beyond VI: 2 (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1990), 27–37, 59–72; George Yule, *Pragmatics*, Oxford Introductions to Language Study (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3–7. Cf. also Teun A. van Dijk, *Text and Context: Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*, Longman Linguistics Library 21 (London: Longman, 1980).

⁴⁰ Cf. Harry P. Nasuti, "The Poetics of Biblical Prophecy: Point of View and Point of Standing in the Prophetic Books," in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honour of Robert R. Wilson*, ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook, LHBOTS 502 (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 100–13.

⁴¹ The text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader are not real persons, but textual constructions. The text-immanent author is the author present within the text and the text-immanent reader is the reader present within the text. It is through the text-immanent reader that the actual reader communicates with the text. It can be male or female or neutral gender, but for practical reasons the term 'he' is used to denote all three. For further information on the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader, see Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 274–94. Here the author explains the role of the implied reader in his interactions with the actual reader; Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, 10–11; Jon-K. Adams, *Pragmatics and Fiction*, Pragmatics & Beyond VI:2 (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1990), 32–37; Stephanie Anne Sieburth, *Reading 'La Regenta': Duplicious Discourse and the Entropy of Structure*, Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages 29 (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1990), 45–51.

communication flows through the characters, with particular focus on the Lord character, and its implications for the text-immanent reader.⁴²

- The principal idea behind the communication-oriented analysis is the perception of the texts as communicative. A text is not written for its own sake and the reading of a text is not done in isolation, rather the text has a communicative function,⁴³ where the primary roles are taken by the author, the reader and the characters.
- The textual communication can give rise to two different explanations; one relating to the textual world⁴⁴ and the other to the extra-textual world.
- The communication between the real author (composer of the text) and the real reader (historical reader of the text) happens in the extra-textual world. That means that this extra-textual realm belongs more to the field of historical study. This aspect is not included in this dissertation due to the limited scope of this project.
- In the textual world, the text is of prime importance, with the text-communication description being carried out through the medium of discursor/narrator, characters, text-immanent author and text-immanent reader.
- The text-internal communication occurring between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader is of special importance. Through this communication, the real

⁴² The core concepts of communication-oriented analysis that has been followed in this research are influenced by van Wieringen's contributions in the field of communicative exegesis. See Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, *The Implied Reader in Isaiah 6–12*, BibInt 34 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998), 1–26, describes the communications in Isaiah 6–12 through a text-linguistic and domain analysis; van Wieringen, *The Reader-Oriented Unity of the Book Isaiah*, Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese van de Bijbel en zijn Tradities Supplement Series 6 (Vught: Skandalon, 2006), 10–15; van Wieringen, "Isaiah 24:21–25:12: A Communicative Analysis," *Formation and Intertextuality in Isaiah 24–27*, ed. James Todd Hibbard and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, AIL 17 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013), 77–97; van Wieringen, "Isaiah 12, 1–6: A Domain and Communication Analysis," 149–172; van Wieringen, "Communicatiegeoriënteerde Exegese en Tekstuele Identiteit," 3–46; van Wieringen, "Transformative Poetry: A General Introduction and a Case Study of Psalm 2," *Perichoresis* 14 (2016): 3–20; van Wieringen and Piet J. van Midden, "Moses as a Teacher in the Narration about the Gold Bullock: A Communication-Oriented Exegesis of Exodus 32," ed. Bart Koet and Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, CBET 88 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 9–28.

⁴³ Ellen J. van Wolde, *Words Become Worlds: Semantic Studies of Genesis 1–11*, BibInt 6 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1994), 181.

⁴⁴ A comment by Eco is significant in this regard: "you cannot use the text as you want, but only as the texts wants you to use it. An open text, however 'open' it be, cannot afford whatever interpretation." See Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, 9. Likewise, van Wolde remarks, "a text is like a guide who directs a reader on a journey. The reader starts travelling, but the text maps out the road." See also Ellen J. van Wolde, "The Text as an Eloquent Guide: Rhetorical, Linguistic and Literary Features in Genesis 1," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Lénart J. de Regt, J. de Waard and J. P. Fokkelman (Assen: Van Gorcum; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 134.

reader has access to the text and can continue to relate to the content of the text without any immediate identification with the characters or without appropriating any of the views of the characters in the text.⁴⁵ By avoiding the danger of appropriation in this way, the text becomes more intelligible in the communication process. Besides, the text-communication becomes precise and fresh without losing its coherence, and the multifariousness of the text can be revealed through the involvement of the text-immanent reader.⁴⁶

The real reader does not communicate with the text by associating emotionally with the characters. In such a situation, the character, the text-immanent reader and the real reader would be fused into one and the text would lose its fundamental sense. It is through the text-immanent reader that the real reader receives reading-directions and enters the communicative process, which in turn helps to place him/her in the story itself.⁴⁷

1.4 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Having examined the methodological concerns of the research, the focus turns to the structure and content of the dissertation.

The dissertation consists of eight chapters. After this introductory chapter, chapters 2 to 7 offer the text-linguistic analysis of Amos with particular focus on the Lord character. The entire text has been divided into the following linguistic units: 1:1–2, 1:3–3:2, 3:3–15, 4:1–13, 5:1–6:14, 7:1–9:15, where each unit forms one chapter. The analysis of the 6 chapters follows a common basic structure, as follows:

- A syntax diagram with an English translation is presented, followed by an exploration of the syntactic features of the clauses and units outlined in the diagram.
- A text-semantic study taking into consideration the issues, mainly in relation to the Lord character, explores the meaning of the text.

⁴⁵ On non-appropriation theology see Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, “Psalm 65 as Non-Appropriation Theology,” *Biblica* 95 (2014): 179–97; Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, “The Triple-Layered Communication in the Book of Amos and Its Message of Non-Appropriation Theology,” in Koet and van Wieringen, *Multiple Teachers in Biblical Texts*, 89–106.

⁴⁶ Rabbi Jonathan Magonet, “Character/Author/Reader: The Problem of Perspective in Biblical Narrative,” in de Regt, de Waard and Fokkelman, *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, 13; van Wolde, *Words Become Worlds*, 175–76.

⁴⁷ van Wieringen, “The Reader in Genesis in 22:1–19,” 300.

- A pragmatic study affirming the communicative structure of the unit.
- Finally, the concluding remarks relate solely to the role of the Lord.

The concluding chapter (chapter 8) deals exclusively with the development in the communicative role of the Lord. The communication concerning the Lord that occurs between the characters and its implications for the text-immanent reader, are addressed here.

A concise summary of the structure and content of each chapter is given below.

Chapter 1: The introductory chapter contains a description of the methodology and the content of the dissertation. This chapter includes: (i) the research purpose, (ii) the main research question and a set of supportive sub-questions, (iii) an explanation of the methodology pursued, with special emphasis on the text-linguistic approach in three different, but connected, phases, namely text-syntax, text-semantics and text-pragmatics, (iv) an outline of the content of the dissertation and (v) the concluding remarks.

Chapter 2: The second chapter focuses on the opening verses of the book of Amos 1:1–2. A number of studies on these verses are available. It is true that these studies are mostly dedicated to the nature of Amos' occupation,⁴⁸ or to the earthquake mentioned in 1:1,⁴⁹ or to the study of the expressions of the Lord, who is roaring and raising his voice, making comparisons with Joel 4:16–17. Nevertheless, this study is conducted with a communicative focus. In order to achieve the intended goal, the minor units in the text are identified (1:1a–c and 1:2a–e) from the syntax diagram and an examination is conducted to discover the way in which they are interconnected, both syntactically and semantically. This is followed by a pragmatic analysis, with the aim of understanding how, through the text-immanent author, the communication of Amos hints at the approaching judgement of the Lord. The concluding remarks on the role of the Lord focus mainly on the references to the Lord, in particular the persuasive prophetic reference – *the LORD roars from Zion and from Jerusalem he utters his voice* – in 1:2b–c.

Chapter 3: In the third chapter, Amos 1:3–3:2 is surveyed. This unit, which consists of a number of direct speeches, records a series of prophecies against eight nations, including

⁴⁸ Richard C. Steiner, *Stockmen from Tekoa, Sycamores from Sheba: A Study of Amos' Occupations*, CBQMS 36 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2003).

⁴⁹ R. Reed Lessing, "Amos's Earthquake in the Book of the Twelve," *CTQ* 74 (2010): 243–59.

Judah and Israel, the chosen people of God. The syntactic study is conducted in order to find out if there are any structural similarities between the minor units. Based on the syntactic units, the semantic analysis aims to discover if there is any semantic congruence and examines each prophecy separately in order to learn what transgressions have been perpetrated by each nation, as well as the resultant divine punishments. The pragmatic analysis concerns the communication that takes place on three levels: addressing Israel, Judah and the text-immanent reader.⁵⁰ The concluding part of this chapter ascertains the significance of the communicative role of the Lord in the prophecies against the nations.

Chapter 4: Having studied the prophecies against the nations, the fourth chapter deals with unit 3:3–15. The linguistic issues within the two major parts 3:3–8 and 3:9–15 are the primary concern of the text-syntactic section. The issues concerning prophecy and the impending divine judgement are revealed in the semantic study. At the pragmatic stage the rhetorical questions in 3:3–8 and the direct speeches in 3:9–15 are analysed with a view to finding out how the communication takes place. Using rhetorical questions, in 3:3–8 the speaker creates a situation of inevitability for the addressee, of accepting the Lord's instruction to prophesy. In 3:9a–10d and 13a–15d the prophet is addressed in a more intimate 'you'-figure speech manner and his profound yes to the Lord's word is evident. The concluding remarks focus on the role of the Lord and to that end, various direct speeches of the Lord are examined in order to find out how they portray his impending judgement.

Chapter 5: This chapter deals with linguistic unit 4:1–13. It begins with a prophetic call *שְׁמַעוּ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה* (*hear this word*) followed by a divine oath. Having determined the syntactic constructions and peculiarities of each minor unit and their correlations, the semantic issues are closely observed. The persistent failure of the people of Israel and the consequent warnings as part of the Lord's effort to win them back, are brought to the fore. The recurring phrase *וְלֹא־שָׁבַתְתֶּם עָדִי* (*yet you did not return to me*) in 4:6–11 highlights simultaneously the stubbornness of the people of Israel and the Lord's longing for their repentance. The expression *הַכּוֹן לִקְרֹאת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ* (*be prepared to meet your God*) in 4:12 also serves as a reminder to turn away from evil ways. The pragmatic section concentrates on the

⁵⁰ A communication-oriented analysis of Amos 1:2–3:15, carried out by van Wieringen supports this section. See van Wieringen, "The Triple-Layered Communication in the Book of Amos and its Message of Non-Appropriation Theology," 91–98; van Wieringen, "The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15," 7–19.

communicative elements in each unit within 4:1–13. Here the vocative פְּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן (*cows of Bashan*) receives attention due to the subject-verb incongruity of a masculine plural verb and a feminine plural noun being used together. The divine involvement all throughout the unit is the focal point in the concluding remarks with particular attention being given to the divine description in 4:13a–g.

Chapter 6: Linguistic unit 5:1–6:14 is the subject of chapter six. The syntactic investigation focuses on the structural peculiarities of each minor unit, followed by an explanation of the formation of the bigger units. The semantic analysis explores the critical situation facing the people of Israel. The lamentations (5:1a–3f, 16a–17c), woe announcements (5:18a–20d; 6:1a–2f) and an oath of the Lord (6:8a–e) confirm that widespread destruction and ruin await them. The various communicative tasks, including the identification of the speaker, the addressee, the time of speaking, the role of the characters, and the involvement of the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader are all discussed in the pragmatic section. Finally, the concluding remarks refer to the words spoken by the character Lord, and how he is described by both the prophet and the text-immanent author.

Chapter 7: The seventh chapter studies 7:1–9:15, the final linguistic unit. Various grammatical features – structural, rhetorical, and morphological – are considered in the syntactic analysis section. The intention of the semantic study is, however, to explore the content and the meaning of the text. In this section, an account of five visions, the Amaziah–Amos confrontation and a promise of restoration are described. The pragmatic analysis looks at the communicative process in the same three areas. The concluding remarks focus on the Lord primarily from the point of view of the communication by the Lord and about the Lord.

Chapter 8: The eighth chapter is the concluding chapter of the dissertation. The aim of this chapter is to provide from a communication-oriented perspective the justification for the main research question put forward at the beginning. Consequently, this becomes an exploration of the development of the role of the Lord on the basis of the text-linguistic analysis already conducted in chapters two to seven. The communication between the Lord and the various characters is evaluated, and is followed by an examination of the reader-

oriented communication structure in the book, and of the implications for the text-immanent reader.

1.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

- This dissertation is a study focusing on communication in Amos with special reference to the development in the role of the Lord, who is the principal agent of communication in the prophecies of Amos.
- To address the research question a text-linguistic and communication-oriented analysis is conducted.
- At the text-linguistic stage, a text-syntax diagram with clause divisions and connections using a hook-system in conjunction with an English translation is provided. Then the linguistic units concerned are explored from a textual and literary perspective through separate syntactic, semantic and pragmatic analyses. Having completed a text-linguistic analysis in this way, the present research fills a gap in the exegetical studies of Amos.
- Both the text-communication and the text-internal communication phases help to draw a distinction between the characters, the real author, the real reader, the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader, which in turn provides new insights into the text-communication. Interacting with the text through the communication between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader reduces for the real reader the possibility of flaws in the text-communication that could arise from the immediate appropriation of the message or any identification with the characters within the text.
- Finally, a few remarks regarding the broader horizon of this research with a view to possible further studies: (i) since the aim of this research as a whole is to uncover the development in the divine communication as it is envisioned in the text of Amos, it would be of interest to research the relation between the communication in the text and its historical context. (ii) This research is entirely concentrated on MT Amos. Research on LXX Amos would be an interesting comparative study. For example, were there any textual communication changes in the Greek translation of the text? Likewise, a comparative study to discover the similarities and differences between the divine communication in Amos and

that in the other minor prophets would be a worthy undertaking. (iii) The various theological themes prominent in the textual communicative study of the book of Amos draw attention to the study of the contextualized interpretation of the communication techniques in the book. The many possible interpretations widen the areas of communication evoked in the book, providing further options for any future research. In addition to this, it is also open to research in detail the hermeneutical aspects of the divine and prophetic communications.

Having thus specified the methodological approach and the outline of the thesis, it is intended to proceed to the text-linguistic and communication-oriented analysis of Amos in the following chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

AMOS 1:1–2

THE LORD MAKES HIS VOICE HEARD

The LORD roars from Zion and from Jerusalem he utters his voice (1:2b–c). This startling introduction, where Amos refers to the thundering voice of the Lord, immediately arouses interest in the book. The severity of the tone creates an atmosphere which not only attracts attention, but also provides a depiction of the Lord, which sets the scene for what is to follow. All of this, together with the extent to which this portrayal of the Lord accords with the message concerning Israel (1:1a–c) are the topics for consideration in this chapter. To elucidate these matters, a detailed analysis of the text will be conducted from the point of view of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The syntactic analysis provides an understanding of the structure of the two verses, while the semantic study concentrates on their content and meaning, with the focus on the role of the Lord. Finally the pragmatic exploration looks at the communication contained within the text, specifically, concerning who is speaking and to whom as well as the importance of the communication emanating from the Lord.

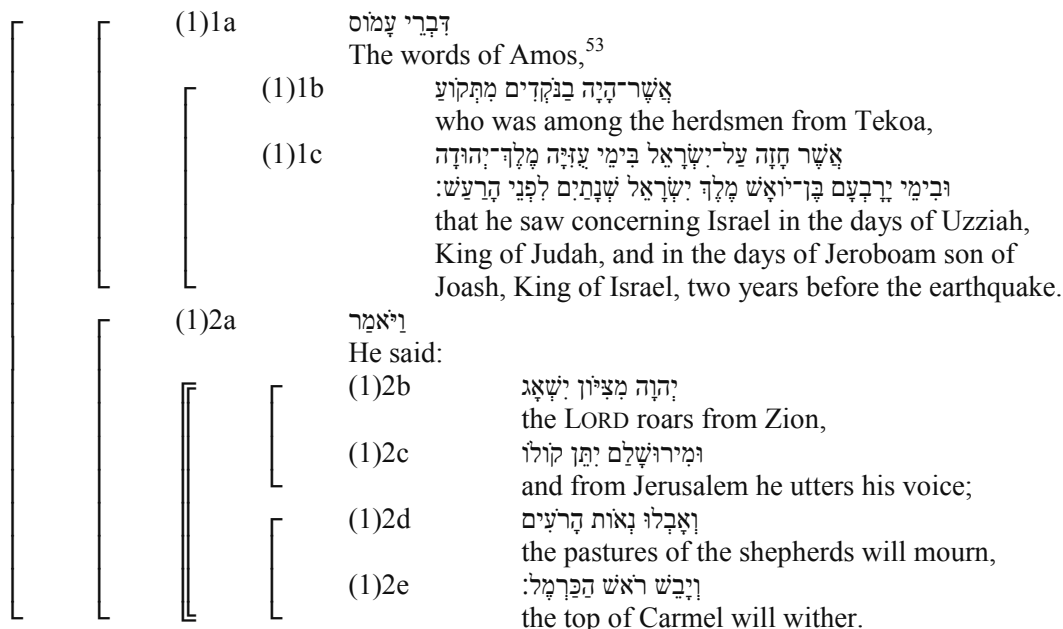
2.1 TEXT-SYNTAX: AMOS 1:1–2

Firstly, to facilitate a detailed investigation, the pericope is divided into clauses (see 2.1.1 text-syntax diagram).⁵¹ As the diagram shows, first two verses are divided into eight clauses which combine to form the minor units 1:1a–c and 1:2a–e. Secondly, in 2.1.2 text-syntax analysis, based on the exploration of the grammatical elements of the text, the clause connections are established.⁵² It can be seen from the analysis that the two minor units, 1:1a–c and 1:2a–e, are not independent of one another, but interrelated.

⁵¹ I acknowledge the help received from ETCBC in the exercise of parsing Hebrew. I have referred to the Bible online learner, page: <http://bh.3bmoodle.dk>, which is a learning tool based on SHEBANQ, one of many tools of ETCBC. To get an outline of such data bases, see Cody Kingham and Wido van Peursen, “The ETCBC Database of the Hebrew Bible,” *JSem* 27 (2018): 1–13; Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé and Jacobus A. Naudé, “New Directions in the Computational Analysis of Biblical Hebrew Grammar,” *JSem* 27 (2018): 1–17.

⁵² For an overview of the syntactic parameters pertaining to the classification of clauses, integration of clauses into a larger unit, forms of verbs and other words in clauses with their discursive functions, see Eep Talstra, “A Hierarchy of Clauses in Biblical Hebrew Narrative,” in Wolde, *Narrative Syntax and the Hebrew Bible*, 94–97; Francis I. Andersen and A. Dean Forbes. *Biblical Hebrew Grammar Visualized*, LSAWS 6 (Winona Lake, IN:

2.1.1 Diagram



2.1.2 Analysis

As shown in the above diagram, Amos 1:1–2 is divided as follows:

major unit	minor units
1:1a–2e	1:1a–c and 1:2a–e

The opening expression דְּבָרֵי עָמוֹס (*the words of Amos*) in the first minor unit 1:1a–c functions as a beginning title.⁵⁴ The two relative clauses, אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה בְּנִקְדִּים מִתְּקוֹעַ (*who was among the herdsmen from Tekoa*, 1:1b)⁵⁵ and אֲשֶׁר חָזָה עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל (*that he saw concerning Israel*, 1:1c), both of which contain verbs in *qatal*-form (הָיָה and חָזָה) in the second

Eisenbrauns, 2012), 86–134; A. Mosak Moshavi, *Word Order in the Biblical Hebrew Finite Clause: A Syntactic and Pragmatic Analysis of Preposing*, LSAWS 4 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 48–63.

⁵³ A respective Hebrew-English working translation in the syntactic diagram is used in the discussion of the respective chapters unless otherwise stated.

⁵⁴ Expressions similar to דְּבָרֵי עָמוֹס are found in Eccl 1:1 (דְּבָרֵי קֹהֶלֶת) and in Neh 1:1 (דְּבָרֵי נְחֶמְיָה). However, of the twelve minor prophets, this construction is confined to Amos, and outside of this it is to be found in Jeremiah alone (דְּבָרֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ Jer 1:1). See John D. W. Watts, “Superscriptions and Incipits in the Book of the Twelve,” in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve*, ed. James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney, SymS 15 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2000), 116. See also Edgar W. Conrad, “Semiotics, Scribes and Prophetic Books,” in *Redirected Travel: Alternative Journeys and Places in Biblical Studies*, ed. Roland Boer and Edgar W. Conrad, JSOTSup 382 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 45–46.

⁵⁵ For a detailed discussion on the syntax of this expression, see Steiner, *Stockmen from Tekoa*, 87–90.

position,⁵⁶ describe the person of Amos and his prophetic ministry and highlight the opening expression 1:1a. The copulative verb הָיָה not only provides background information on Amos, but it also modifies the noun נֶגֶד (*herdsman*). The importance of the verb הָיָה is emphasized further in association with the three temporal phrases.⁵⁷ Of these, בְּיָמֵי עֲזַיָּה (in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah) and בְּיָמֵי יֶרֶבּוֹאָם בֶּן-יֹאשָׁא מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל (in the days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, King of Israel) are prepositional phrases, both of them beginning with בְּ. The third phrase, שְׁנַתִּים לִפְנֵי הָרָעַשׁ (two years before the earthquake) is asyndetic, a linguistic feature which not only distinguishes it from the first two, but adds structural significance to it syntactically, while also giving it greater value semantically.

The second minor unit 1:2a–e begins with narrative *wayyiqtol*, וַיֹּאמֶר (*and then he said*).⁵⁸ This verb form וַיֹּאמֶר, a *verbum dicendi*, introduces the direct speech in 1:2b–e.⁵⁹ No further example of the *wayyiqtol* verb forms is to be found in this unit. The direct speech consists of two *yiqtol*-forms שָׁאֵג (to roar) and נָתַן קוֹל (to give voice) in 1:2b–c, and two *w^eqatal*-forms אָבַל (to mourn) and יָבֹשׁ (to dry) in 1:2d–e. While the *yiqtol* refers to the actions of the Lord and has a discursive structure,⁶⁰ the narrative which follows is facilitated by the *w^eqatal*-forms. This narrative construction is then interrupted, after which it is not seen again until

⁵⁶ In this regard, see Alviero Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 30; Christo H. J. Van der Merwe, “An Overview of Hebrew Narrative Syntax,” in Wolde, *Narrative Syntax and the Hebrew Bible*, 10–14.

⁵⁷ Temporal clauses express the time frame of a situation in relation with the main clause. A primary means of identifying the temporal clause is the infinitive with the prepositions בְּ, כִּי, אַחֲרַי, אַחֲרָיו, אַחֲרָיו, אַחֲרָיו; but also other prepositions. See Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 176.

⁵⁸ The chief verbal form used in the narrative is *wayyiqtol*. For theory on Hebrew verbs, see Kalkman, *Verbal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, 87–88. See also Alviero Niccacci, “An Integrated Verb System for Biblical Hebrew Prose and Poetry,” in *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007*, ed. André Lemaire, VTSup 133 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 99–127, for an overview of the verb system, tense transition and distinction between tense and time; Frank Matheus, *Text and Time: A Functional Approach to the Biblical Hebrew Verbal System*, Wissenschaftliche Schriften der WWU Münster 7 (Münster: MV Wissenschaft, 2014).

⁵⁹ *Verbum dicendi* is a Latin term used to express the verb of speaking or to introduce a quotation. This is helpful in differentiating direct and indirect speeches in a sentence. Goldenberg observes, except on rare occasions, when some other verb of saying is used, direct speech is prevented by the *Verbum dicendi* ’amar (to say), with these limited cases being an ellipsis. See Gideon Goldenberg, “On Direct Speech and the Hebrew Bible,” in *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Syntax: Presented to Professor J. Hoftijzer on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, eds., K. Jongeling, H. L. Murre-Van den Berg, and L. van Rompay, *Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics* 17 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1991), 86; to learn more about the significance of *verbum dicendi* in introducing direct speech, see Samuel A. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible*, VTSup 46 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1992), 59–130.

⁶⁰ As *wayyiqtol* develops the narrative structure of a text, the *yiqtol* verb forms are prominent in marking a discursive text. See Alviero Niccacci, “Basic Facts and Theory of the Biblical Hebrew Verb System in Prose,” in Wolde, *Narrative Syntax and the Hebrew Bible*, 197–200.

7:10, where it is employed for the second time.⁶¹ The two *x-yiqtol* clauses יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן יִשָּׁאֵג (*the LORD roars from Zion*) and וּמִירוּשָׁלַם יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ (*and from Jerusalem he utters his voice*) in 1:2b–c are noteworthy in view of their inversion. In 1:2b יְהוָה is the first word which comes before the verb. Likewise, in 1:2c the location יְרוּשָׁלַם is positioned at the beginning before the verb. It is emphatic because of its position.⁶² Thus, 1:2b and 1:2c have the same grammatical structure, as do 1:2d (וְאֶבְלוּ נְאוֹת הָרָעִים, *the pastures of the shepherds will mourn*) and 1:2e (וְיָבֵשׁ רֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל, *the top of Carmel will wither*), which contain verbs in *w^eqatal*-form. However, in the former two clauses, no reason is given for the roaring of the Lord, nor do they reveal what he utters. Once again, the positioning of the verbs אָבַל (*to mourn*), and יָבֵשׁ (*to dry*) emphasize these actions, inferring that the *w^eqatal* clauses are no less important syntactically than the *x-yiqtol* clauses. The sets of verbs in both the *x-yiqtol* clauses and the succeeding *w^eqatal* clauses remain at the fore in this unit. The four verbs, יִשָּׁאֵג, נָתַן קוֹל, אָבַל and יָבֵשׁ provide an understanding of the role of the Lord. The significance of the Lord's roaring and utterances will be discussed in the section dealing with semantics (2.2), while that of Zion and Jerusalem will be developed under the heading text-pragmatics (2.3).

2.1.3 Summary

The syntactic analysis shows the distinctiveness of each unit. The first minor unit 1:1a–c has two verbs in *qatal*-form, whereas, in the second minor unit 1:2a–e there is a combination of verb forms – *wayyiqtol*, *yiqtol* and *w^eqatal*. However, temporal phrases can be found in 1:1c only. Despite these structural differences there are also similarities between the units. The reasons for connecting them are many. Firstly, וַיֹּאמֶר the opening phrase in 1:2a, confirms that of 1:1a עָמֹס דְּבָרִי, both of which concern Amos. Secondly, the verb forms, *qatal* in the first unit and *wayyiqtol* in the second, are both employed similarly to provide the background information on the text. Thirdly, there are multiple references to locations in both units, Tekoa (1:1b), Israel and Judah (1:1c), Zion (1:2b), Jerusalem (1:2c) and Carmel (1:2e).

⁶¹ Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 159; van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15,” 8; Eidevall, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 92.

⁶² Usually a verb comes first in Hebrew grammar.

2.2 TEXT-SEMANTICS: AMOS 1:1–2

2.2.1 What Amos Saw (1:1a–c)

דְּבָרֵי עָמוֹס אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה בִּנְקֻדִּים מִתְקוֹעַ אֲשֶׁר חָזָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּימֵי עֲזִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה וּבִימֵי יִרְבֵּעָם בֶּן־יֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנֵתַיִם לִפְנֵי הָרֶעִשׁ: (Amos 1:1a–c)

The opening expression דְּבָרֵי עָמוֹס (*words of Amos*) attests Amos as being the author. This is followed by information on Amos himself (אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה בִּנְקֻדִּים מִתְקוֹעַ), what distinguished him from his contemporaries in that he was chosen to have a vision of Israel (אֲשֶׁר חָזָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל) and when he received it (שְׁנֵתַיִם לִפְנֵי הָרֶעִשׁ וּבִימֵי יִרְבֵּעָם בֶּן־יֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּימֵי עֲזִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה).⁶³ In 1:1b–c details of his profession and the place where he lived are given. He was one among the herdsmen⁶⁴ of Tekoa, a village in the Judean hills a few miles southeast of Bethlehem.⁶⁵ Other than his profession as a shepherd, Amos could not lay claim to having any particular talent or ability. Nevertheless, he is chosen to speak a message of doom (1:1a–2e).

Although 1:1a opens with the expression דְּבָרֵי עָמוֹס (*the words of Amos*), no record of these words appears in either 1:1b or 1:1c. Rather, the spoken words are presented in 1:2a–e. Nevertheless, there is a hint regarding the substance of his words in 1:1c: חָזָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל (*he saw concerning Israel*). As the terms דְּבָר (words) in 1:1a and חָזָה (*to see*) in 1:1c belong to

⁶³ Many commentaries discuss this matter – Amos, the man and his mission – for instance, see Gary V. Smith, *Amos: A Commentary*, Library of Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 1–4; Shalom M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 1–7, 33–36; Jörg Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, trans. Douglas W. Stott, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 1–2; Billy K. Smith and Frank S. Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, NAC 19B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 23–28; Eidevall, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 94–96.

⁶⁴ The nature of Amos' profession is opened to debate as נֶקֶד is rarely used when referring to a shepherd. נֶקֶד also occurs in 2 Kgs 3:4. Was he wealthy like a sheep-owner? Was he a poor shepherd who struggled for his daily existence? See various opinions in William Rainey Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 3; James Luther Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, OTL (London: SCM, 1969), 10; Gerhard F. Hasel, *Understanding the Book of Amos: Basic Issues in current Interpretations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 36–40; Steiner, *Stockmen from Tekoa*, 70–87; Gerald A. Klingbeil and Martin G. Klingbeil, "The Prophetic Voice of Amos as a Paradigm for Christians in the Public Square," *TynBul* (2007): 165; Howard Moltz, "A Literary Interpretation of the Book of Amos," *Hor* 25 (1998): 62.

⁶⁵ Steiner, *Stockmen from Tekoa*, 89; Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24A (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 188; Hasel, *Understanding the Book of Amos*, 49; Klingbeil and Klingbeil, "The Prophetic Voice of Amos as a Paradigm for Christians in the Public Square," 164; Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò, "Biblical Prophet Amos: A Simple, Poor Shepherd from Judah?" in *Eyergesias Charin: Studies Presented to Benedetto Bravo and Ewa Wipszycka by Their Disciples*, ed. Tomasz Derda, Jakub Urbanik, Marek Węcowski, *JJP Supplement* 1 (Warsaw: Sumptibus Auctorum, 2002), 211–12.

the semantic-field of ‘communication,’ it can be deduced that the words of Amos (1:1a) result from his seeing (1:1c).⁶⁶

Elsewhere in the book the term דָּבַר occurs in relation to the prophets. It is stated in 3:7 that the Lord does nothing, if he has not already revealed his secret to his servants, the prophets. This is reinforced in 3:8 when the Lord asked, who cannot prophesy?⁶⁷ It is possible to identify a connection between דָּבַר and prophecy in both verses. Likewise, the word הִזָּה confirms its relation to prophecy, and thus the seeing (הִזָּה) in 1:1c points to a prophetic vision rather than the natural vision of the eyes.⁶⁸ Briefly, as they relate to prophecy, דָּבַר becomes a prophetic word and הִזָּה becomes more of a revelatory vision. In other words, the expressions עָמוֹס דָּבָרִי and וַיֹּאמֶר assume a prophetic dimension, with the expression הִזָּה also becoming a prophetic seeing or vision. Therefore, among the shepherds of Tekoa, Amos is singled out as being different. What makes him different are his words and his seeing. That what he saw had existentially changed his life from that of shepherd to one of prophet, is attested by the proclamation in 1:2a–e. The three temporal phrases in 1:1c highlight Amos’ prophetic activity. The first two phrases provide information on the Kings of Israel who ruled at the time, King Uzziah of Judah and King Jeroboam of the Kingdom of Israel.⁶⁹ The final and third temporal asyndetic phrase mentions a specific disastrous earthquake.

It is interesting to note the association between Amos’ seeing concerning Israel and the earthquake (רָעַשׁ). The term רָעַשׁ in the Hebrew Bible is often used metaphorically. For instance, it can be a natural phenomenon, which could be interpreted as a sign of the displeasure of the Lord,⁷⁰ or nature’s response to the theophanic presence of the Lord.⁷¹ It,

⁶⁶ Marvin A. Sweeney remarks, the expression *which he saw concerning Israel*, qualifies the initial reference to the words of Amos. Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets: Volume One, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, ed. David W. Cotter, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 197.

⁶⁷ אָדָנִי יְהוָה דָּבָר מִי לֹא יִנְבֵּא (Amos 3:8) and לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה אֲדָנִי יְהוָה דָּבָר כִּי אִם-גָּלָה סוֹדוֹ אֶל-עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים (Amos 3:7).

⁶⁸ See Jackie A. Naudé, “חִזָּה,” *NIDOTTE* 2:56, 58. (cf. Isa 1:1; 2:1; 13:1; Mic 1:1; Hab 1:1; Ezek 12:27; 13:16).

⁶⁹ See 2 Kgs 14:17–15:7, and 2 Chr 26, for an account of the reign of these kings.

⁷⁰ Num 16:31; 1 Sam 14:15; 1 Kgs 19:11. See Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 193.

⁷¹ Exod 19:18; Judg 5:4; Hab 3:6; Ps 18:7; 29:6; 97:4; 114:4. See Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 193.

רָעַשׁ, can also mean physical shaking caused by extreme fear.⁷² Because of the variety of uses of the word רָעַשׁ it is difficult to interpret the clause לְפָנַי הָרָעַשׁ with any great certainty. Could it be a means of divine judgement, imagery depicting punishment for sins? Or could it be a natural disaster remembered years later due to its intensity? The next part of the book presents the prophecies as a series of divine judgements that have the restorative purpose of returning Israel to the Lord. In such a scenario, the earthquake (רָעַשׁ) could be considered to be a means of divine judgement with two years being the time allowed for repentance.⁷³ However, despite all of the warnings the people of Israel failed to return to the Lord, resulting in the earthquake.⁷⁴ Hence, Amos' vision concerning Israel and the earthquake mentioned in 1:1c establishes an association between them.

2.2.2 The Lord Roars (1:2a–e)

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן יִשְׁאַג וּמִירוּשָׁלַם יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ וְאָבְלוּ נְאוֹת הָרָעִים וְיָבֵשׁ רֹאשׁ הַכֶּרְמֶל: (Amos 1:2a–e)

Unit 1:2a–e is notable in that for the first time, the Lord is explicitly mentioned and is portrayed in a metaphorical way: יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן יִשְׁאַג (*the LORD roars from Zion*). The clause וּמִירוּשָׁלַם יִתֵּן קוֹלוֹ (*and from Jerusalem he utters his voice*) 1:2c semantically matches the clause מִצִּיּוֹן יִשְׁאַג (*roars from Zion*) 1:2b. As one immediately follows on from the other these parallel clauses serve to emphasize the roaring of the Lord. Possibly, the roaring (שָׁאָג) could be that of a lion.⁷⁵ Normally the lion is a trope indicating threat or power, while the roaring predicts danger.⁷⁶ If so, how can the action of the Lord, who roars and utters his voice be understood? That it cannot in any way be taken to be a symbol promising a pleasant

⁷² M. V. van Pelt and W. C. Kaiser, Jr., “רָעַשׁ,” *NIDOTTE* 3:1160–61, (cf. Ezek 12:18).

⁷³ Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 7.

⁷⁴ Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 7.

⁷⁵ The verb שָׁאָג, appears further in chapter 3 where it is asked “would a lion roar in the forest if there is no prey for him? Would a young lion raise his voice from the den, without having caught anything?” (Amos 3:4). In addition, the significance of the prophecy is metaphorically presented in Amos 3:8: “a lion has roared, who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken, who will not prophesy?” Harper’s observation is in line with this as he says, “the roaring is that of the lion, not that of thunder (as perhaps in Joel and Jer 25:30) nor of waves, though this is found elsewhere, cf. Isa 5:30.” Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 10.

⁷⁶ See the discussion on the metaphorical application of lion to Yahweh by means of the lion’s roar in Brent A. Strawn, *What Is Stronger than a Lion?: Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, OBO 212 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 58–65.

outcome, is confirmed in 1:2d–e: וְאֶבְלוּ נְאוֹת הָרֹעִים (*the pastures of the shepherds will mourn*) and וְיִבֶּשׁ רֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל (*the top of Carmel will wither*).⁷⁷

The first implication is mourning (1:2d):⁷⁸ וְאֶבְלוּ נְאוֹת הָרֹעִים (*the pastures of the shepherds will mourn*).⁷⁹ The mourning of the pastures can allude to the lamentation of the shepherds themselves. Even though withering of the pastures occurs, there is no specific mention of what causes such mourning. One possible explanation is the likelihood of drought in the land.⁸⁰ In any case, the situation predicted is distressing. The roaring of the Lord in 1:2b, the raised voice in 1:2c, the wailing in 1:2d and the withering of Carmel in 1:2e all point to a divine verdict and vengeance. Amos, being a shepherd himself, appreciates the agony felt by the shepherds when the pastures perish.

Similarly, the second prediction, the withering of the top of Carmel (1:2e), further reinforces the effect of the Lord's roaring.⁸¹ That the strike occurred on the top of Carmel is significant. The inference is that fire is sent not from below but from above, suggesting that there is a divine intervention behind this action. A second point worthy of note is that Carmel is a place renowned for its green and fertile land.⁸² Therefore, the withering of Carmel adds emphasis to the severe effect of the Lord's roaring.⁸³ Apart from all this, it is significant that it is from Zion that the Lord roars, the effects of which reach Carmel in the

⁷⁷ S. D. (Fanie) Snyman, "Eretz and Adama in Amos," in *Stimulation from Leiden: Collected Communications to the XVIIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament*, Leiden 2004, ed. Hermann Michael Niemann and Matthias Augustin, BEATAJ 54 (Frankfurt am main: Peter Lang, 2006), 140.

⁷⁸ The employment of the lamentation theme is in evidence elsewhere in the book of Amos. See Amos 5:1–3, 16–17; 8:3, 8 and 8:10.

⁷⁹ Hayes explains the metaphor of the earth mourning. She argues that the verb אָבַל is linked with earth or a related word. See Katherine Murphey Hayes, *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*, AcBib 8 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 12. Here the pastures of the shepherds are somehow connected to the earth. In 8:10 the earth does not mourn but becomes dark and feasts are turned into mourning.

⁸⁰ Notice the correlation between the themes of mourning and dryness in Amos 1:2 in Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 19–35.

⁸¹ Strawn, *What Is Stronger than a Lion?* 59.

⁸² Carmel which is in the northern mountain range of Israel, is distinguished by its lush and bountiful vegetation, rich pastures, and forests (compare, for example, Isa 33:9; 35:2; Jer 50:19; Amos 9:3; Nah 1:4; 2 Chr 26:10). Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 40.

⁸³ According to Karl Möller "the withering of the top of Carmel is even more surprising and staggering than the mourning or withering of the shepherd's pastures." Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 164. Paul also expresses how significant the withering of Carmel is: "it [Carmel] represents the polar opposite of "wilderness" (Isa 32:15–16; Jer 4:26; 50:19) and "brush" (Isa 29:17; 32:15), and its withering signifies a major calamity (Isa 33:9; Nah 1:4)." Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 40; and Harper "the greatest calamity imaginable would be the withering of Carmel." Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 11.

far north of Israel. Such is the thunder in the Lord's voice that can be heard throughout the Kingdoms of Israel in the north and Judah in the south.⁸⁴

2.2.3 Summary

In brief, units 1:1 and 1:2 are interconnected, attested by the opening expressions, *words of Amos* in 1:1a, *he saw concerning Israel* in 1:1c and *he said* in 1:2a. Amos employs the metaphorical expressions, roaring of the Lord and raising of his voice to predict danger. His prophetic words (1:1a, 1c, 2a) hint that the divine judgement is imminent with confirmation coming in the allusions to weeping and withering.

2.3 TEXT-PRAGMATICS: AMOS 1:1–2

Having completed the semantic analysis, this section is an examination of the pragmatic elements of the communication in Amos 1:1–2. Special attention is given to the study of the role of the Lord in the communication. Each unit is discussed separately.

2.3.1 Communication: About Amos

Initially, unit 1:1a–c, which contains no direct speech, does not appear to have any communicative role. Despite the opening expression עַמּוֹס דְּבָרֵי (words of Amos) which hints at some follow-on, direct quotations, it in fact provides information on Amos rather than on any of his words. Therefore, the discussion over who is speaking and who is addressed and the time of speaking is apparently unimportant. However, on closer examination, an element of communication can be seen, specifically in the expression הָזָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל (*he saw concerning Israel*) in 1:1c. Even though it is not stated what is being communicated in the message concerning Israel, the phrase הָזָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל implies that it is being directed at Israel. Besides this, the unit provides information on Amos – his identity and his profession (1:1b), his vision and when it occurred (1:1c). Therefore, it is legitimate to state that the communication implicitly present in unit 1:1a–c is the initial stage in the development of the prophetic communication in the book of Amos.

⁸⁴ Paul interprets this in relation to the sovereignty of the Lord. That the Lord roars from Zion, from where his voice carries from Carmel in the north to Judah in the south, attests the prophetic message that he rules over the whole of Israel and Judah. Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 37.

2.3.2 Communication: Amos Speaks

The communication phase in unit 1:2a–e can be explained by the presence of the *אָמַר* form of the verb in 1:2a. This *verbum dicendi* *אָמַר* introduces direct speech in 1:2b–e. The *verbum dicendi* which appears in *wayyiqtol*-form (*וַיֹּאמֶר*) indicates that the words were spoken at some time in the past. The communication begins with the character Amos (*וַיֹּאמֶר*), who takes the role of prophet. Though Amos is the speaker in 1:2a, it reveals nothing about the addressee. His communication in 1:2a–e is related to what he saw concerning Israel in 1:1c, which leads to the assumption that the communication is with the Northern Kingdom of Israel. However, an alternative view is suggested in 1:2b–c when Amos communicates that the Lord roars from Zion (1:2b) and utters his voice from Jerusalem (1:2c). In 1:2b–c the Lord himself speaks and although there is no specific mention of with whom precisely he is communicating, one cannot deny the Judean perspective.⁸⁵ The scenario changes in 1:2d–e where the focus is firmly on how, in the aftermath of the Lord’s speaking, the pastures of the shepherds and Carmel have been significantly affected. Therefore, the geographical spread suggests the entirety of the nation,⁸⁶ as does the Lord’s roaring and speaking from Zion and Jerusalem, which reaches Carmel. This prompts the conclusion that even though no specific addressee is identified in 1:2a–e, Amos communicates with both Israel and Judah.

2.3.3 Summary

The following diagram represents the communication to be found in 1:1a–2e.

	<u>speaker</u>	<u>addressee</u>	<u>unit</u>
text-	character Amos	no specific addressee	1:1a–c
immanent	[חֲזֹה עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל]		
author →	character Amos	no specific addressee	1:2a–e
	[וַיֹּאמֶר]		

⁸⁵ Park, *The book of Amos as Composed and Read in Antiquity*, 70; van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15,” 8–9.

⁸⁶ A geological study of the land that comprises both Carmel in the north and southern pastures indicates that the whole of Israel and Judah together is being considered. See Pietro Bovati and Roland Meynet, *Le Livre du prophète Amos*, Rhétorique Biblique 2 (Paris: Cerf, 1994), 28, 32; van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15,” 14.

2.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Inferences about the role of the Lord in the first minor unit (1:1a–c) can be deduced from two expressions in 1:1c. The first expression is *הָזָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*he saw concerning Israel*) and the second expression is *שְׁנָתַיִם לִפְנֵי הָרָעָשׁ* (*two years before the earthquake*). Since the words and the vision of the prophet are always connected to the Lord it is reasonable to conclude that the vision concerning Israel, which was seen by Amos could not occur independently of the Lord.⁸⁷ Prominent in the second expression is the word *רָעָשׁ* (*earthquake*). An earthquake is a natural phenomenon and never the result of human initiative. Accordingly, the earthquake mentioned in 1:1c signals a divinely ordered punishment due to the reluctance of the people of Israel to turn back to the Lord. Since an earthquake is involved, which is a calamity beyond human control, it is a reminder of the great power and majesty of the Lord.⁸⁸

The second unit 1:2a–e differs from the first unit (1:1a–c), in that there is an explicit reference to the Lord: *the LORD roars from Zion and from Jerusalem he utters his voice* (1:2b–c). It is not known why the Lord roars or what he utters. Nevertheless, the roaring can be compared with the roaring of a lion after its prey. Consequently, the roaring of the Lord can be taken to be his wrath,⁸⁹ as can the raising of his voice depict a furious Lord. Even though the reason for this anger is not known, devastation resulting from the Lord's anger is confirmed in 1:2d–e. The level of the Lord's fury is such that the pastures and rich soil of Carmel are totally destroyed.⁹⁰ In essence, such depictions of the Lord are a fitting prelude to the forthcoming prophecies against the nations.

⁸⁷ See Smith, *Amos*, 22. Based on the expression *he saw concerning Israel* (*הָזָה*, *he saw, viewed*), Smith accepts the vision was of divine origin and declares that Amos faithfully proclaimed what he heard and reported what he saw.

⁸⁸ See Katharine J. Dell, "Amos and the Earthquake: Judgment as Natural Disaster," in *Aspects of Amos: Exegesis and Interpretation*, ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn and Andrew Mein, LHBOTS 536 (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 14, who remarks that while, from a moral standpoint humans see earthquakes as a means of meting out punishment for wrongdoing, the power of the Lord to control when and where these and other natural disasters occur must not be underestimated.

⁸⁹ Smith, *Amos*, 26, 28, who views the roaring of the Lord as an announcement of judgement and additionally mentions that even in Jerusalem he wields his power.

⁹⁰ Smith, *Amos*, 27, interprets the withering as a validation of the words of judgement spoken by Amos.

CHAPTER THREE

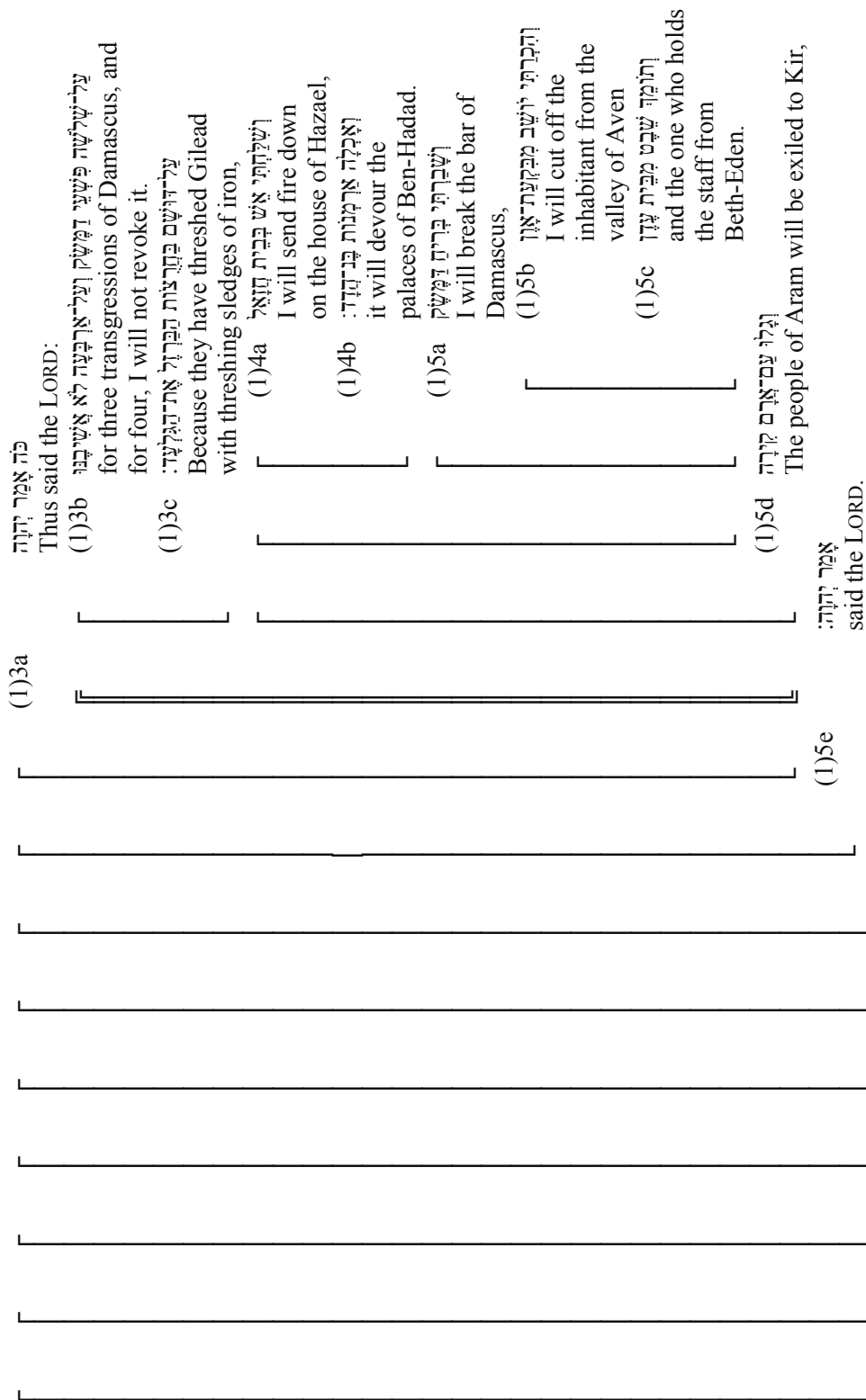
AMOS 1:3–3:2

PROPHECIES REGARDING THE NATIONS

A succession of prophecies concerning the nations, eight in total, is the subject for study in this chapter. Each prophecy begins with the divine declaration that the Lord will not revoke his decision to inflict punishments (1:3b, 6b, 9b, 11b, 13b; 2:1b, 4b, 6b). Following on from this are the accusations of indiscretions which are levelled against the nations and the resulting chastisements. The direct speech occurrences in this unit, all exhibiting the same structural pattern, with the divine speech formula *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה* (*thus said the LORD*), being common to all eight prophecies, provides a connection between them. In each prophecy, apart from at the beginning, where the Lord makes what appears to be an irreversible decree, the construction employed in the announcement of the punishments incorporates the verbs in *w^eqatal*-form. The semantic study based on the syntactic units, examines the content of each of these units for the meaning of the prophecies and the implications for each nation, with all transgressions being subject to divine judgement. The pragmatic analysis of the unit explores communication in three areas – with Judah, Israel, and the text-immanent reader. The concluding part of the study places the focus on the Lord, specifically where he is to be found in Amos 1:3–3:2 and the significance of his role in the prophecies.

3.1 TEXT-SYNTAX: AMOS 1:3–3:2

3.1.1 Diagram



(1)6a			

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

Thus said the LORD:

(1)6b

עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי עֲזָה וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשַׁכְּנֶנּוּ
for three transgressions of Gaza,
and for four, I will not revoke it.

(1)6c

עַל־הַגִּילְיוֹתָם גָּלוּת שְׁלָמָה
Because they carried
into exile entire communities

(1)6d

לְהַסְגִּיר לְאֹדוֹם:
to deliver to Edom,

(1)7a

וְשָׁלַחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּחוֹמֹת עֲזָה
I will send fire down
on the wall of Gaza

(1)7b

וְאָכְלָה אֶת־קִנְיָנֶיהָ:
it will devour its palaces.

(1)8a

וְהִכְרַחְתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מְאֻשְׁדּוֹד
I will cut off the inhabitant
from Ashdod

(1)8b

וְהוּמָה שֹׁכֵט מְאֻשְׁקֶלֶן
and the one who holds
the staff from Ashkelon.

(1)8c

וְהִשְׁבִּיתִי יָדִי עַל־עֶקְרוֹן
I will turn my hand against Ekron

(1)8d וְאֶבְרִי שְׁאֵרִית פִּלְשְׁתִּים

and the remnant of the Philistines will perish,

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה:

said the Lord GOD.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

Thus said the LORD:

(1)9b

עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי־צֹר וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשַׁכְּנֶנּוּ
for three transgressions of Tyre, and for
four, I will not revoke it.

(1)9c

עַל־הַסְגִּירָם גָּלוּת שְׁלָמָה לְאֹדוֹם

[illegible]

וְכָל-שָׂרֵי אֲדָרְגֹג עִמּוֹ
and I will kill all her officials with him,

			(2)7d	and the man and his father go to the same maid לְמַעַן תִּקַּח אֶת-שָׁם קְדוּשֵׁי
			(2)8a	so as to profane my holy name, וְעַל-בָּגָדִים טְהוֹרִים כָּל-מִזְבֵּחַ and they stretch out pledged garments beside every altar,
			(2)8b	and they drink wine paid by fines וַיֵּין עֲנוּשִׁים יִשְׂתּוּ בֵּית אֱלֹהֵיהֶם in the house of their God.
			(2)9a	וְאַנְכִי הִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֶת-הָאֻמִּי מִפְּנֵיהֶם But I myself exterminated the Amorite from their faces,
			(2)9b	אֲשֶׁר כְּגֹבַה אֶרְצוֹם גָּבְרוּ whose height was like the height of the cedars
			(2)9c	וְהָסֵן הוּא כְּאֳלוֹנִים and he was strong as the oaks;
			(2)9d	וְאֲשַׁמֵּיד פָּרִיו מִפְּעַל and I destroyed his fruit from above
			(2)9e	וְשָׁרְשָׁיו מִתַּחַת and his roots from beneath.
			(2)10a	וְאַנְכִי הֵעָלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם Also I brought you out from the land of Egypt
			(2)10b	וְאוֹלֹךְ אֶתְכֶם בְּמִדְבָּר אֲרָבָעִים שָׁנָה and led you forty years in the wilderness
			(2)10c	לְרִשֵּׁת אֶת-אֶרֶץ הָעָמֹרִי to possess the land of the Amorite;
			(2)11a	וְאַתָּם מְבוֹנִים לְנֶבִיאִים I raised up prophets from your sons
			(2)11b	וּמְבַחוּרֵיכֶם לְנָזִירִים and Nazirites from your young men.
			(2)11c	הָאֵל אֵל-יִזְחָק

		(2)11d	Is this not so בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל sons of Israel?
	(2)11e	נְאֻם־יהוה utterance of the LORD.	
		(2)12a	וַתַּשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַנָּזִירִים יַיִן But you made the Nazirites drink wine
		(2)12b	וַעֲלִי־הַכֹּהֲנִים צִוִּיתָם and commanded the prophets,
		(2)12c	לֵאמֹר saying:
		(2)12d	לֹא תִנָּבֵאוּ you shall not prophesy.
		(2)13a	הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מַעֲדִיק תְּהֻמָּתֶיךָ See! I make totter under you
		(2)13b	כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲדִיק הָעֲגֻלָּה as that the cart totters
		(2)13c	הַכֹּלֵאָה לָהּ עֲמִיר that is full of sheaves;
		(2)14a	וְאַבֶּד מְנוּס קִשְׁלָהּ flight will perish from the swift
		(2)14b	וְחֹזֶק לֹא־יִצְמִיץ כּוֹחוֹ and the strong, will not retain his strength,
		(2)14c	וְגִבּוֹר לֹא־יִמְלֹט נִפְתּוֹ neither shall the mighty deliver himself;
		(2)15a	וְהַפֶּסֶחַ הַקָּשָׁשׁ לֹא יַעֲמוֹד the archer will not stand
		(2)15b	וְקַל בְּרוּגְלוֹ לֹא יִמְלֹט his ground, the swift of foot will not escape,

3.1.2 Analysis

Amos 1:3–3:2 has the following divisions.

minor units	bigger units		major units
1:3a–5e	1:3a–8e		1:3a–2:5b
1:6a–8e			
1:9a–10b	1:9a–12b		
1:11a–12b			
1:13a–15b	1:13a–2:5b		
2:1a–3c			
2:4a–5b			
2:6a–9e	2:6a–9e	2:6a–16b	
2:10a–11e	2:10a–16b		2:6a–16b
2:12a–16b			
3:1a–2b			3:1a–2b

The first minor unit in this section is 1:3a–5e. The direct speech formula *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה* (*thus said the LORD*) which appears in 1:3a introduces the direct speech in 1:3b–5d.⁹¹ This speech formula is a verbal clause having the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר in *qatal*-form, which serves to mark the direct speech which follows as the message of the Lord.⁹² This introduction is repeated in all further minor units up to 2:6a–9e. The direct speech opens with the *x-yiqtol* verbal clause in which *x* denotes a prepositional phrase which begins with the preposition *עַל* (עַל-יְשָׁלְשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי דְמָשֶׁק וְעַל-אַרְבָּעָה). Then the negative particle *לֹא* together with the *yiqtol*-form in the first person singular (אֶשְׁכַּחַם), describe the action of the Lord: *I will not revoke it*.⁹³ The

⁹¹ Divine speech formulas are those prescribed expressions that begin or end sayings establishing them as words of the Lord. See James Limburg, “Sevenfold Structures in the Book of Amos,” *JBL* 106 (1987): 217. For a brief description of speech formulas which recur in the book of Amos, see Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos*, trans. Waldemar Janzen, S. Dean McBride, Jr., and Charles A. Muenchow, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 92, 143–44; Meier, *Speaking of Speaking*, 273–97; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 74–79.

⁹² This same formula is seen again in Amos 1:6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 3:11, 12; 5:3, 4, 16 and 7:17. This type of speech formula associates the Lord with the message.

⁹³ The difficulty in interpretation arising from the presence of the suffix in the refrain *לֹא אֶשְׁכַּחַם* (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6), is much debated. Linville thinks the sense of *לֹא אֶשְׁכַּחַם* differs in some cases, but the expression is polysemous, and the uncertainty stirs the imagination of the readers regarding the bond between the Lord and Israel, see James R. Linville, “What Does ‘It’ Mean? Interpretation at the Point of No Return in Amos 1–2,” *BibInt* 8 (2000): 405, 408, 409. Michael L. Barre, “The Meaning of l' 'sybnw in Amos 1:3–2:6,” *JBL* 105 (1986): 617, 622, who thinks, *לֹא אֶשְׁכַּחַם* refers to each nation named. However, many studies agree on a single meaning, though they differ widely on what *לֹא אֶשְׁכַּחַם* refers to. In this study the suffix “it” alludes to the punishment that the Lord is about to inflict. See Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 128, 153–54; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona*, KAT 13 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971), 129–30.

third person masculine singular suffix attached to the verb indicates the Lord's decision not to withdraw the expected punishment.⁹⁴ Again, this refrain recurs in all of the minor units up to 2:6a–9e, the difference being the nation accused. The verbal form דוֹשָׁם (*they have threshed*) in 1:3c is an infinitive construct containing a suffix. However, this masculine suffix is in the plural form and it denotes the transgressions of Damascus. Thus the two verbs (לֹא אֲשִׁיכֶנּוּ, דוֹשָׁם) in 1:3b–c differ in tense and form and denote the foreground and background respectively. There follows in 1:4a–5d a series of verbs in *w^eqatal*-form: וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי (*I will send*) in 1:4a, וְאָכְלָה (*it will devour*) in 1:4b, וְשָׁבַרְתִּי (*I will break*) in 1:5a, וְהִכַּרְתִּי (*I will cut off*) in 1:5b, and וְגָלוּ (*they shall go into exile*)⁹⁵ in 1:5d, excluding 1:5c due to its elliptical construction.⁹⁶ These verbs, while looking forward, place the text in the discursive background. This creates an air of expectancy in Damascus regarding the impending calamities. Three of the five verbs in *w^eqatal*-form are in the first person singular, indicating that these are the actions of the Lord. The direct speech formula אָמַר יְהוָה (*said the LORD*), which contains אָמַר, the most often used quotation verb in *qatal*-form, concludes the unit (1:5e).

The infinitive construct verbal forms (לְהַסְגִּיר, הַגְלוֹתָם), which appear in 1:6c and 1:6d connect both clauses due to their similar verbal forms. However, the morphological difference, which occurs as the infinitive construct (עַל-הַגְלוֹתָם) in 1:6c, has a masculine plural suffix which is absent in the second verb (לְהַסְגִּיר). The verbs are preceded by two different prepositions, namely, עַל and לְ. עַל is used causally whereas לְ, attached to the infinitive verb, denotes purpose. Clauses 1:7a–8d contain a series of verbs in *w^eqatal*-form. Of these five, three, וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי in 1:7a, וְהִכַּרְתִּי in 1:8a and וְהִשְׁבִּיתִי in 1:8c are in the first person singular, confirming these as the actions of the Lord. The remaining verbs are in *w^eqatal*-forms, וְאָכְלָה in 1:7b being in the third person feminine singular, while וְאָבְדוּ in 1:8d is in the plural. An interruption in the succession of clauses containing *w^eqatal* verbal forms occurs with the

⁹⁴ Therefore, Shalom Paul concludes that the suffix “it” is anticipatory in this clause. Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 46; Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, 25; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 178.

⁹⁵ The theme of exile appears, explicitly and implicitly, in several places in the book, this being the first reference. Further references are found in Amos 1:6, 8, 9, 15; 2:13–16; 3:7; 4:2–3; 5:5, 27; 6:7; 7:11, 17; 9:4, 14–15. See Jan Christian Gertz, “Military Threat and the Concept of Exile in the Book of Amos,” in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin, BZAW 404 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 19–26.

⁹⁶ Clause 1:5c עַד שֶׁכֵּט מִבֵּית עַד, not having a verb is dependent on the verb כָּרַת *to cut off* in 1:5b. For discussion on ellipsis, see Widder, “Linguistic Fundamentals,” in Mangum and Westbury, *Linguistics & Biblical Exegesis*, 52–54.

inclusion of the elliptical clause (וְתוֹמֵךְ שִׁבֵּט מֵאַשְׁקֵלִיּוֹן) in 1:8b, which contains a participle dependent on the *w^eqatal*-form in 1:8a. The concluding direct speech formula אָמַר יְהוָה which is seen with the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר in 1:8e is in *qatal*-form and has the long divine naming אָדֹנָי יְהוָה.

The infinitive verb (הַקְטִיף) headed by עַל in 1:9c provides background information on the decision of the Lord to punish. This continues in the *w^e-x-qatal* clause וְלֹא זָכְרוּ, in 1:9d, which gives the second reason for the forthcoming punishment. It is significant that out of the two *w^eqatal*-form which follow, the first וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי (*I will send*), in the first person singular, describes the action of the Lord, while the second וְאָכְלָה (*it shall devour*) in the third person feminine singular, describes the consequences. It is remarkable that this unit contains no concluding direct speech formula.

Again, in 1:11b–12b, as in the previous unit, there is no concluding speech formula. A number of verbal forms in the direct speech maintain the thread of the discursive in the text. The verbal clause 1:11c is constituted of an infinitive construct with a third person masculine singular suffix (וְשַׁחַת רְחֵמָיו) and is followed by a *qatal* construction (וְשַׁחַת) in 1:11d. It is a significant point that the *w^e* before the verb שַׁחַת is a real conjunction and not part of the verbal form. Therefore the verb וְשַׁחַת, seemingly a *w^eqatal*, is in fact, a verb in *qatal*-form. The clause, וַיִּטְרֹף לְעֵד אָפוֹ (1:11e), a *wayyiqtol* construction, is a *Sproßerzählung*. It is followed by a *qatal*-form וְשַׁחַת, in 1:11f. The changes in the person, gender, and number of the *w^eqatal* verbal forms (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי, וְאָכְלָה) in the remaining two clauses 1:12a and 1:12b, are worthy of note.

The final unit in the first chapter of the book 1:13a–15b is introduced by and concludes with the divine speech formula which includes the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר in *qatal*-form. The introduction אָמַר יְהוָה כֹּה and the conclusion אָמַר יְהוָה, differ only in the addition of the particle adverb כֹּה to the first. This is followed by two infinitive construct forms (וְרָחַב, בָּקַע) in 1:13c and 1:13d. Both clauses are characterized by the presence of the masculine plural suffix (בָּקַעַם and וְגִבּוֹלָם). The infinitive construct in both clauses are preceded by the causal preposition עַל in 1:13c and by the particle conjunction לְמַעַן, used to indicate purpose, in 1:13d. Of the three *w^eqatal* verbal clauses, the first, 1:14a, is in the first person singular and

denotes punishment, while both 1:14b and 1:15a are in the third person plural, and indicate further punishment.

The infinitive construct form with the third person masculine singular suffix (שָׁרַפּוּ) describes the sin of Moab in 2:1c. This is followed in 2:2a–c, 2:3a by a series of verbs in *w^eqatal*-form, וְשָׁלַחְתִּי (2:2a); וְאָכְלָה (2:2b); וַיָּמָת (2:2c) and וְהִכֵּרְתִּי (2:3a), which constitutes the main line of the background communication. In each clause the *w^eqatal*-form appears in the first position. There follows, in 2:3b, אֶהָרוֹג, a verb in *yiqtol*-form. Though the *w^eqatal* clause in 2:3a (a verb in *w^eqatal*-form – object – prepositional phrase) and the *yiqtol* clause in 2:3b (object – a verb in *yiqtol*-form – prepositional phrase) are notable with an inversion, they differ in orientation as the *w^eqatal* marks the background, but also looks forward, and the *yiqtol* refers to the foreground. For example, though both the slaying of the judge (וְהִכֵּרְתִּי) and the killing of the officials (וְכָל־שָׂרֵיהֶּ אֶהָרוֹג עִמּוֹ) together appear to be one event, they do not happen in sequence.⁹⁷ The direct speech ends in 2:3c with the concluding speech formula אָמַר יְהוָה.

The infinitive construct clause, עַל־מַעֲסָם אֶת־תּוֹרַת יְהוָה (2:4c), having an objective phrase marked with an object marker אֶת (אֶת־תּוֹרַת יְהוָה) gives the reason for the punishment. Further information on this is given in 2:4d, a *w^e-x-qatal* construction (וְהִקְשִׁיוּ לֹא שִׁמְרוּ). וְהִקְשִׁיוּ with a masculine singular suffix denoting the statutes of the Lord forms the *x*. The background nature of the text is maintained by the verbs in *wayyiqtol*-form (וַיִּהְיוּ) in 2:4e and in *qatal*-form (הָלְכוּ) in 2:4f, and by the two verbs in *w^eqatal*-form (וְשָׁלַחְתִּי, וְאָכְלָה) in 2:5a and 2:5b.

The infinitive construct clause עַל־מַכְרָם בִּכְסָף צָדִיק (2:6c), preceded by the preposition עַל and the elliptical clause וְאַבְיֹן בְּעֶבֶר נַעֲלִים (2:6d), gives the reasons⁹⁸ for the Lord not revoking his decision to punish. 2:7a is a participial verbal clause preceded by the article הַ, which functions as a *ḥ-relativum*. Present in 2:7b–c are two *w^e-x-yiqtol* constructions. The infinitive construct verbal form הָלַל preceded by a preposition לְמַעַן in 2:7d, reflects the purpose (*so as to profane my holy name*) of the action in 2:7c (*and the man and his father go to the same maid*).⁹⁹ Two further *w^e-x-yiqtol* constructions appear in 2:8a and 2:8b where *x* denotes two

⁹⁷ Duane A. Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, Baylor Hand Book on the Hebrew Bible (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 51.

⁹⁸ John C. Beckman, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, rev. and exp. 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 190. A cause can be expressed in an infinitive construct, preceded by עַל.

⁹⁹ Beckman, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, 83.

locative phrases: אֶצֶל כָּל־מִזְבֵּחַ (*beside every altar*) and בֵּית אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (*house of their God*). The locative phrase in 2:8a is preceded by the preposition אֶצֶל. The *w^e-x-qatal* construction which follows is characterized by the first person personal pronoun אֲנִי, despite the presence of the first person verb in *qatal*-form הִשְׁמַדְתִּי, in 2:9a, putting the emphasis on the verb. This is followed by two nominal clauses אֲשֶׁר כְּגִבָּה אֲרִיזִים גָּבְהוּ (2:9b) and וְחֶסֶן הוּא כְּאַלּוֹנִים (2:9c). The first is a relative clause which opens with the relative particle אֲשֶׁר, and also contains a comparative preposition כְּ. This comparative preposition also appears in the second, which is an adjective clause. In 2:9d, the verb in *wayyiqtol*-form וְאֶשְׁמִיד, in the first person singular, refers to the action of the Lord, with the elliptical clause (וְשִׁירָשִׁי מִתַּחַת) which follows, being dependent on the *wayyiqtol*.

Interestingly, in 2:10a–11e, for the first time the direct speech is not introduced by a divine speech formula. 2:10a is a *w^e-x-qatal* construction where, given the inclusion of the first person *qatal* verbal form (הִשְׁמַדְתִּי), the inclusion of the first person personal pronoun אֲנִי reinforces the message. The account of the Lord's interventions continues with the narrative verbal form (וְאִלֵּךְ) in 2:10b, where the locative phrase בַּמִּדְבָּר (*in the wilderness*) and the temporal phrase of duration אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה (*forty years*) occur. In 2:10a–b a second person suffix (אַתָּה) marks the object. The preposition לְ, in the purpose clause לְרִשֹּׁת אֶת־אֶרֶץ הָעָמֹרִי, 2:10c, expresses the purpose. Clause 2:11b, an elliptical clause depends on the verb in *wayyiqtol*-form (וְאִקָּם), which occurs in the preceding clause 2:11a. Both clauses have second person masculine plural suffixes attached to their objects (מִבְּחֹרֶיכֶם, מִבְּנֵיכֶם). The verbs in *qatal*-form (הִשְׁמַדְתִּי) in 2:10a and in *wayyiqtol*-form (וְאִלֵּךְ, וְאִקָּם) in 2:10b and 2:11a indicate sequential interventions of the Lord. The interrogative particle הֲ, in the interrogative nominal clause הֲאֵפֶּה אֵין־זֹאת (is this not so) 2:11c, appears in the opening position, denoting a question. This clause contains the adverb אֵפֶּה, the negative linking noun אֵין and the demonstrative pronoun זֹאת. The question directed at the sons of Israel attested by the vocative בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in 2:11d demands an affirmative answer from the sons of Israel, and an acknowledgement of the graciousness shown by the Lord. The direct speech in 2:10a–11d ends with the concluding formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה (*utterance of the LORD*). It is remarkable that, for the first time, a verbless divine speech formula is used.

As in unit 2:10a–11e, the direct speech in 2:12a–16b has no introductory formula. Significantly, there is an inversion between these two units.¹⁰⁰ The inversion involves the change in word order, from prophets – Nazirites in 2:11a–b to Nazirites – prophets in 2:12a–b. In addition, the *wayyiqtol*-form (וַיִּשְׁקֹךְ) that opens the direct speech in 2:12a has Israel as its subject, whereas, the Lord is the subject of the *wayyiqtol*-form (וַאֲזַקִּים) in 2:11a. The *wayyiqtol*-form in 2:12a is followed by a *w^e-x-qatal* structure. Here *x* is a prepositional phrase (וְעַל־הַנְּבִיאִים), and the verb in *qatal*-form is second person masculine plural (צִוִּיתֶם). The direct speech in 2:12d, introduced by the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר in 2:12c (לְאָמַר), is embedded. This embedded direct speech has only a single clause consisting of the *yiqtol* verbal form (לֹא תִנָּבְאוּ), preceded by the negative particle לֹא. An anticipatory clause, הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי הֹנֶה + participle construction. The personal pronoun אֲנֹכִי preceding the participle verb מַעֲשֶׂיךָ describes what is about to happen. It should be noted that the *w^eqatal* clause (2:14a) is followed by a series of clauses of *w^e-X-yiqtol* structure.¹⁰¹ They follow a definite pattern as illustrated below:

clauses	conjunction	subject	negative particle	predicate	object
2:14b	וְ	הָזֶזֶק (msg)	לֹא	יֵאֲמָר (3 msg)	כִּזְזוֹ
2:14c	וְ	גִבּוֹר (msg)	לֹא	יִמְלֹט (3 msg)	נִפְשׁוֹ
2:15a	וְ	תִפֶּשׂ הַקֶּשֶׁת (msg)	לֹא	יַעֲמֹד (3 msg)	——
2:15b	וְ	קָל (msg)	לֹא	יִמְלֹט (3 msg)	——
2:15c	וְ	רֶכֶב הַסּוּס (msg)	לֹא	יִמְלֹט (3 msg)	נִפְשׁוֹ

Clause 2:16a is also a *w^e-X-yiqtol* construction, however, it does not conform to the above pattern. It has an additional temporal expression, namely, בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא (*on that day*), in place of a negative particle. A verbless divine speech formula נֹאֲמֵי־יְהוָה closes the direct speech in 2:16b.

Of the ten direct speeches in 1:3–2:16, none was introduced with a verbal foreground form, an essential factor required to define a complete unit. As the foreground *yiqtol* verbal form

¹⁰⁰ Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 69.

¹⁰¹ Robert E. Longacre and Andrew C. Bowling, *Understanding Biblical Hebrew Verb Forms: Distribution and Function across Genres*, SIL International Publications in Linguistics 151 (Dallas: SIL International, 2015), 248, notes, in v. 14 the *w^eqatal* verbal form וַאֲבָד occurs as if introducing a *w^eqatal* supported prophecy, but the negative לֹא (not) comes before each of the following five verbal forms, changing them into the *yiqtol*-form.

(שְׁמָעוּ), which appears at a discursive level in 3:1a, unit 3:1a–2b becomes part of the wider unit 1:3–2:16.¹⁰² The אָשֶׁר-clause (אָשֶׁר דָּבַר יְהוָה עָלֵיכֶם), 3:1b, gives information about the object in the imperative clause הִנֵּה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה (3:1a). The second person masculine plural in the imperative verb שְׁמָעוּ and the second person masculine plural suffix כֶּם in the אָשֶׁר-clause are made definite in the vocative בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*sons of Israel*) in 3:1c. The elliptical clause 3:1d is dependent on the *qatal*-form (דָּבַר) in 3:1b. This is followed by an embedded direct speech in 3:1e (הַעֲלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר). The Lord’s speech in 3:2 is introduced by the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר in 3:1f. Worthy of note is the emphatic position of רַק אַתְּכֶם (*you only*) in 3:2a.

3.1.3 Summary

The following table illustrates the structural similarities and differences within and between the prophecies regarding the nations.

structural arrangements		
Damascus (1:3a–5e)	introductory formula	<i>qatal</i> (1:3a)
	divine judgement	<i>x-yiqtol</i> (1:3b)
	accusations	<i>infinitive</i> (1:3c)
	punishments	<i>w^eqatal</i> (1:4a–5d)
	concluding formula	<i>qatal</i> (1:5e)
Gaza (1:6a–8e)	introductory formula	<i>qatal</i> (1:6a)
	divine judgement	<i>x-yiqtol</i> (1:6b)
	accusations	<i>infinitive</i> (1:6c–d)
	punishments	<i>w^eqatal</i> (1:7a–8d)
	concluding formula	<i>qatal</i> (1:8e)
Tyre (1:9a–10b)	introductory formula	<i>qatal</i> (1:9a)
	divine judgement	<i>x-yiqtol</i> (1:9b)
	accusations	(i) <i>infinitive</i> (1:9c) (ii) <i>w^e-x-qatal</i> (1:9d)
	punishments	<i>w^eqatal</i> (1:10a–b)
	concluding formula	<i>None</i>
Edom (1:11a–12b)	introductory formula	<i>qatal</i> (1:11a)
	divine judgement	<i>x-yiqtol</i> (1:11b)

¹⁰² de Waard and Smalley contend that 3:1–2 concludes, rather than opens, a major discourse unit (1:2–3:2), see Jan de Waard and William A. Smalley, *A Hand Book on the Book of Amos*, UBS Handbook (Stuttgart; United Bible Societies, 1979; repr., New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 193, 200; van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15,” 12.

	accusations	(i) <i>infinitive</i> (1:11c) (ii) <i>w^eqatal</i> (1:11d) (iii) <i>wayyiqtol</i> (1:11e) (iv) <i>qatal</i> (1:11f)
	punishments	<i>w^eqatal</i> (1:12a, 12b)
	concluding formula	<i>none</i>
Ammon (1:13a–15b)	introductory formula	<i>qatal</i> (1:13a)
	divine judgement	<i>x-yiqtol</i> (1:13b)
	accusations	<i>infinitive</i> (1:13c, 13d)
	punishments	<i>w^eqatal</i> (1:14a–15a)
	concluding formula	<i>qatal</i> (1:15b)
Moab (2:1a–3c)	introductory formula	<i>qatal</i> (2:1a)
	divine judgement	<i>x-yiqtol</i> (2:1b)
	accusations	<i>infinitive</i> (2:1c)
	punishments	(i) <i>w^eqatal</i> (2:2a–3a) (ii) <i>yiqtol</i> (2:3b)
	concluding formula	<i>qatal</i> (2:3c)
Judah (2:4a–5b)	introductory formula	<i>qatal</i> (2:4a)
	divine judgement	<i>x-yiqtol</i> (2:4b)
	accusations	(i) <i>infinitive</i> (2:4c) (ii) <i>w^e-x-qatal</i> (2:4d) (iii) <i>wayyiqtol</i> (2:4e) (iv) <i>qatal</i> (2:4f)
	punishments	<i>w^eqatal</i> (2:5a–b)
	concluding formula	<i>none</i>
Israel (2:6a–9e)	introductory formula	<i>qatal</i> (2:6a)
	divine judgement	<i>x-yiqtol</i> (2:6b)
	accusations	(i) <i>infinitive</i> (2:6d, 7d) (ii) <i>participle</i> (2:7a) (iii) <i>w^e-x-yiqtol</i> (2:7c) (iv) <i>yiqtol</i> (2:8a–b)
	punishments	(i) <i>w^e-x-qatal</i> (2:9a, 12b) (ii) <i>wayyiqtol</i> (2:9d–e)
	concluding formula	<i>none</i>
Israel (2:10a–11e)	introductory formula	<i>none</i>
	divine judgement	<i>none</i>
	accusations	<i>none</i>
	punishments	<i>none</i>
	concluding formula	<i>nominal</i> (2:11e)
	introductory formula	<i>none</i>

Israel (2:12a–16b)	accusations	(i) <i>wayyiqtol</i> (2:12a) (ii) <i>w^e-x-qatal</i> (2:12b) (iii) <i>yiqtol</i> (2:12d)
	punishments	(i) <i>participle</i> (2:13a) (ii) <i>w^eqatal</i> (2:14a) (iii) <i>w^e-x-yiqtol</i> (2:14b–c, 15a–c, 16a)
	concluding formula	<i>nominal</i> (2:16b)

- In all there are prophecies against eight nations, six of which are foreign nations (Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab), the remaining two being Judah and Israel.
- The direct speech appears in all of the prophecies, with some having either an introductory or a concluding divine speech formula or both. The prophecies against Damascus (1:3a–5e), Gaza (1:6a–8e), Ammon (1:13a–15b) and Moab (2:1a–3c) have both. The prophecies against Tyre (1:9a–10b), Edom (1:11a–12b) and Judah (2:4a–5b) lack a concluding formula, but have an introductory formula. The prophecy against Israel (2:6a–16b) has an introductory formula similar to that of the other introductory formulas, although the concluding formula (נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה) differs in that it is not marked with a *verbum dicendi*.
- A feature of the units is that in every case where the direct speech formula acts as the introduction, it precedes a divine verdict in *x-yiqtol* form. The verdicts have a common structure. The preposition עַל (*for*) + שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי (*three transgressions*) is followed by the name of the nation, then עַל (*for*) + אַרְבָּעָה (*four*) and finally the decision of the Lord לֹא אֲשַׁכֵּנּוּ (*I will not revoke it*).
- Accusations made in the infinitive construct are always followed by the divine verdict in *x-yiqtol* structure. In the cases of Damascus (1:3c), Gaza (1:6c–d), Ammon (1:13c–d) and Moab (2:1c), one accusation only is recorded against each. However, there are multiple accusations made against Tyre (1:9c–d), Edom (1:11c–f), Judah (2:4c–f) and Israel (2:6c–8b, 12a–d).
- Accusations against the nations are followed by announcements, in *w^eqatal* formulations, of divine punishment. Interestingly, there is only one kind of punishment announced against Tyre, Edom and Judah, even though the accusations made against them

are many. On the contrary, the Lord announces various chastisements against Damascus, Gaza, Ammon and Moab, even though each has been accused of one violation only.

The eight prophecies can be divided into two groups, each having a distinct structural pattern. Pattern A has both an introductory formula and a concluding formula, with the emphasis on the punishment. Pattern B has an introductory formula, but no concluding formula and stresses the accusations.¹⁰³

pattern A	pattern B
Damascus, Gaza, Ammon, Moab	Tyre, Edom, Judah, Israel
introductory divine speech formula (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה)	introductory divine speech formula (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה)
refrain (עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעִי וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ)	refrain (עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעִי וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ)
accusations – one only punishments – many	accusations – many punishment – one only
concluding divine speech formula – yes	concluding divine speech formula – none

3.2 TEXT-SEMANTICS: AMOS 1:3–3:2

The semantic analysis explores in detail the judgements against the nations. The similarities found are presented in the table below.

1	the introduction to each prophecy: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (<i>thus said the LORD</i>)
2	recurring formula: עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעִי (<i>for three transgressions</i>) ¹⁰⁴ followed by the name of a nation + וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה (<i>and for four</i>)
3	the decision of the Lord: לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ (<i>I will not revoke it</i>)
4	accusations of the sins committed by each nation and declarations of divine punishments

¹⁰³ Many authors, when arranging them, follow two patterns. However, everyone has their own unique model of presentation. See Smith, *Amos*, 40; Andrew E. Steinmann, “The Order of Amos’s Oracles against the Nations: 1:3–2:16,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 684; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 172; van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations,” 9–10.

¹⁰⁴ David A. Dorsey, “Literary Architecture and Aural Structuring Techniques in Amos,” *Bib* 73 (1992): 305–23. He distinguishes the expression *three transgressions of Israel, even for four* (Chs. 1–2), as one of the many aurally-oriented literary techniques used in the book of Amos to draw in the listening audience. Other such expressions he notes are: *the Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy* (Ch. 3), *yet you did not return to me* (Ch. 4), *seek good and not evil, so that you may live* (Ch. 5), *woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!* (Ch. 5), *I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet* (Ch. 7), *in that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen* (Ch. 8).

In the following section each prophecy is examined in detail.

3.2.1 Warnings for the Six Nations

(i) Prophecy against Damascus:

Damascus is accused of threshing Gilead (1:3c): *עַל־דּוֹשָׁם בְּחַרְצוֹת הַבָּרָזִל אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד* (*because they have threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron*). The word threshing (דוש) can mean the separation of grain from the crops or in a wider sense the trampling on men or nations.¹⁰⁵ It is evident that this figure of speech indicates the destruction of Gilead in the sense that all precious belongings (grains) were stolen or that it was conquered by means of force. The phrase *threshing with sledges of iron* (הַבָּרָזִל בְּחַרְצוֹת) points to the level of hostilities and highlights the brutality perpetrated and the destruction cost.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, punishment is declared on Damascus for the cruelty visited upon Gilead.¹⁰⁷ The four kinds of punishments predicted in 1:4–5 are:

(a) The first of these and its consequences are reported in 1:4a–b: *וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּבֵית חֲזָאֵל וְאָכְלָה* (*I will send fire down on the house of Hazael, and it will devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad*). The punishment by fire¹⁰⁸ comes upon each nation, with the exception of Israel. The fire sent down to Hazael's house also devours Ben-Hadad's palaces, confirming the severe consequences of the iniquities.

(b) The second punishment directed is the breaking of the gate bar that provides protection for the inhabitants, *וְשִׁבַּרְתִּי בָרִים דְּמַשֶּׁק* (*I will break the bar of Damascus*, 1:5a). Consequently, now being insecure, Damascus will find it difficult to defend itself from foreign invaders.

(c) The third verdict, proclaimed in 1:5b–c, will indeed cause great trauma for the population as the Lord dethrones the people in authority: *וְהִכְרַתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מִבְּקַעַת־אֵנוֹן וְתוֹמֵךְ שִׁבְט מִבֵּית עֶדֶן* (*and I will cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven and the one who holds the staff from Beth-Eden*).

¹⁰⁵ William L. Holladay, *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 69.

¹⁰⁶ For similar figurative usages depicting extremely harsh cruelty in warfare, compare, 2 Kgs 13:7; Isa 41:15; Mic 4:13; Hab 3:12. Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 47.

¹⁰⁷ Timmer, "The Use and Abuse of Power in Amos," 105.

¹⁰⁸ Smith, *Amos*, 48; who mentions the association of fire with God's burning anger referencing to Deut 32:22, Isa 5:24–25; 9:17–18; 66:15, Jer 15:14; 17:4, and Zeph 1:18; 3:8.

(d) Finally, it is announced that exile would be the fate of the people of Aram (1:5d), the certainty of which is reinforced by the use of the verb גָּלָה which indicates the forced removal of individuals.¹⁰⁹ In short, as penalties are inflicted on the King (1:4a), the strongholds and symbols of power (1:4b), the city of Damascus (1:5a), the entire population (1:5b), those in power (1:5c) and those sent into exile (1:5d), it is clear that the punishments are all-encompassing.¹¹⁰

(ii) Prophecy against Gaza:

Gaza¹¹¹ transgressed by sending entire communities into exile in Edom (1:6c–d): (עַל־הַגְּלוֹתָם) (גְּלוֹת שְׁלֵמָה לְהַסְגִּיר לְאֶדוֹם). The resulting punishments inflicted are fourfold.

(a) Fire is sent down (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּחוֹמַת עֲזָה), (b) the inhabitants of Ashdod are destroyed (וְהַכְרַתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מִצְשָׁדוֹד), (c) dethroning the one who holds the sceptre from Ashkelon (וְהָשַׁקְטוּ יָדַי עַל־עֶקְרוֹן), and (d) turning his hand against Ekron (וְהָשַׁקְטוּ יָדַי עַל־עֶקְרוֹן).

Except for the last of these, the punishments mirror those given to Damascus.¹¹² Turning his hand against Ekron can be used in a metaphorical sense. The first person verb (וְהָשַׁקְטוּ) and a first person suffix (יָדַי) serve to reinforce the powerful actions of the Lord as he himself punishes them. Doubtless, the outstretched hand of the Lord is not a saving gesture, but one indicating punishment. It is interesting to note the places mentioned in the prophecy against Gaza. Significantly, the Lord has selected Gaza, the stronghold of the Philistines, as the first to be punished, where fire is sent down on the inhabitants, with all being destroyed. Ashdod, Ashkelon and Ekron are also chastised. That all Philistines, without exception, are judged and subjected to punishment can be inferred from the reference to the perishing of their remnant (וְאֶבְדּוּ שְׁאֵרֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים), 1:8d.

¹⁰⁹ For a detailed description on the theological reflections on exile, see David M. Howard, Jr., “גלה,” *NIDOTTE* 1:862–64.

¹¹⁰ Timmer, “The Use and Abuse of Power in Amos,” 105, who suggests that the references to the ruling family, palace, king and subjects stress that the Lord’s judgement is final.

¹¹¹ Gaza was a region consisting of five cities that lay between Egypt and Israel. Therefore, Gaza represents the entire ancient Philistine nation.

¹¹² A minor difference is that in the case of Damascus the fire is specifically sent down upon the house of Hazael and it devours the palaces of Ben-Hadad, whereas in 1:7a–b the whole of Gaza and its strongholds are punished. The next two punishments in 1:8a and 1:8b are also mentioned in 1:5b and 1:5c.

(iii) Prophecy against Tyre:

Two accusations are raised against Tyre.

(a) As in the case of Gaza, Tyre is accused of delivering entire communities over to Edom in 1:9c (עֲלֵה־הַקִּיָּרִים גְּלוֹת שְׁלֵמָה לְאֶדוֹם). In neither case is the community identified, nor is it clear why this happened.

(b) Tyre also stands accused of breaking a covenant of kinship (וְלֹא זָכְרוּ בְרִית אֲחִים), (1:9d).¹¹³ Most likely, this contract was one agreed upon with Israel,¹¹⁴ implying that the Israelites were the ones sent into slavery.¹¹⁵ For both transgressions, the Lord will send fire down on Tyre, refusing to revoke his decision to punish.

(iv) Prophecy against Edom:

In the language employed to describe the transgressions of Edom,¹¹⁶ namely, רָדְפוּ בְּחֶרֶב אָחִיו (he pursued his brother with the sword, 1:11c), וְשָׂחַת רַחֲמָיו (and he ruined all his compassion, 1:11d), וַיִּטְרֹף לְעַד אָפּוֹ (he maintained his anger forever, 1:11e) and וַעֲבָרְתוּ שְׂמֵרָה נֶצַח (and kept his resentment forever, 1:11f), there is an underlying sense of hostility and resentment. The pursuit of his own brother suggests the fracturing of the bond that existed between them.¹¹⁷ Edom abandoned its compassionate nature, forever maintaining its

¹¹³ David J. Reimer, “Interpersonal Forgiveness and the Hebrew Prophets,” in *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2010), 90–91. He points to the significance of the interpersonal dimension, confirmed by the word בְּרִית אֲחִים. Edom ought to have fostered a protective rather than a treacherous relationship. See also George Snyder, “The Law and Covenant in Amos,” *ResQ* 25 (1982):160.

¹¹⁴ For references to the established treaty between Hiram, King of Tyre with David and Solomon, Kings of Israel, see 2 Sam 5:11; 1 Kgs 5:2–6, 15–18; 9:11–14.

¹¹⁵ Juan Manuel Tebes, “La Terminología Diplomática en los Oráculos de Amós Contra Tiro y Edom (Am 1,9–12),” *AuOr* 24 (2006): 243–53, provides a discussion on the treaty and political alliances seen in Amos’ prophecy against Tyre and Edom.

¹¹⁶ Genesis 36 records the history of the Edomites. The Edomites are the descendants of Esau. The status of the first-born was passed on to Jacob and it was impossible for Esau to forgive Jacob whom he believed deceived him in acquiring the inheritance of the first-born. The Edomites, the descendants of Esau fostered this enmity towards Israel. Therefore, they made a treaty with other nations to defeat Israel (for example, with Gaza and Tyre, as seen in 1:6d and 1:9c). For a detailed analysis of Edom, see Juan Manuel Tebes, ““You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite, for He Is Your Brother”: The Tradition of Esau and the Edomite Genealogies from an Anthropological Perspective,” *JHebS* 6 (2006): 1–30.

¹¹⁷ Failure in interpersonal relationships (cf. Obad 10–12). See Reimer, “Interpersonal Forgiveness and the Hebrew Prophets,” in John Day, *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel*, 91; Bradford A. Anderson, *Brotherhood and Inheritance: A Canonical Reading of the Esau and Edom Traditions*, LHBOTS 556 (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 200–201, highlights the theme of brotherhood; relationships are fractured.

anger.¹¹⁸ This results in the Lord sending down fire,¹¹⁹ a fire which destroys Teman,¹²⁰ named after the grandson of Esau, and the strongholds of Bozrah, the capital of Edom.¹²¹

(v) Prophecy against Ammon:

The reasons for the indictment of the Ammonites is their despicable violence perpetrated against the pregnant women of Gilead¹²² with the purpose of enlarging their own territory (בְּקֶעֶם הָרֹת הַגִּלְעָד לְמַעַן הָרְחִיב אֶת־גְּבוּלָם).¹²³ The prosperity of a nation depends largely on the fostering of a new generation. It follows then that attacking the pregnant women is the means not only of curtailing the growth of the population, but of endangering the very existence of the nation. The punishment for this most heinous of crimes¹²⁴ is by fire and exile.

¹¹⁸ Paul interprets this verse in connection with the Jacob-Esau narrative in the book of Genesis (Gen 27:30–40). Esau is promised that by the sword he will survive (Gen 27:40) whereas, in the book of Amos, Edom (Esau) is pursued by his brother Judah (Jacob) and persecuted by the sword. In the book of Genesis, Rebecca thought that the fury of Esau would be short-lived (Gen 27:44–45) whereas, in the book of Amos it is seen to endure forever. Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 64.

¹¹⁹ Mary Mills, “Divine Violence in the Book of Amos,” in *The Aesthetics of Violence in the Prophets*, ed. Julia M. O’Brien and Chris Franke, LHBOTS 517 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 169. The author views violence in 1:11 and elsewhere in the book as a tool for dealing with transgressors or paradoxically as a defence against violent behaviour. See also Robert M. Good, “The Just War in Ancient Israel,” *JBL* 104 (1985): 389–91.

¹²⁰ Gen 36:11.

¹²¹ Thus Anselm concludes that Israel are the chosen people and the sin of Edom against them cannot be allowed to go unpunished. Anselm C. Hagedorn, “Edom in the Book of Amos and Beyond,” in Hagedorn and Mein, *Aspects of Amos*, 56.

¹²² In biblical tradition ripping children from the womb is rarely recorded (cf. 2 Kgs 8:11–12; Hos 14:1). See Shawn W. Flynn, *Children in Ancient Israel: The Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 115. See also Paul A. Kruger, “Mothers and Their Children as Victims in War: Amos 1:13 against the Background of the Ancient Near East,” *OTE* 29 (2016): 100–15, who describes the viciousness of the practice.

¹²³ There is a parallel reference in 1:3 where Damascus has threshed Gilead with iron threshing sledges (1:3c). In 1:13 the Ammonites have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead (1:13c–d). Both nations planned to enlarge their territory by destroying the future generations of Gilead. This act is an anti-allusion to the incident in Genesis where Lot’s younger daughter decided to become pregnant by her father in order to preserve their race. She later give birth to a son whom she named Ben-Ammi, the ancestor of the Ammonites (Gen 19:34–38).

¹²⁴ Smith-Christopher examines in detail this monstrous act of the Ammonites against women in order to widen their borders and summarizes the comments made by scholars. His survey is succinct:

Robinson and Horst’s reference to acts that are ‘Unmenschlichkeiten und Grausamkeiten’ are echoed throughout the literature. Stuart suggests that the language of Ammon’s punishments, with its references to war crimes, day of battle and storm language (wind/gale), is reflective of the gravity of Ammon’s sin – a view likely inspired by Rudolph who states that it was not seeking expansion as such that brought forth God’s particular Zorn, but rather a sadism which ends two lives at the same time. May’s echoed by Howard, goes on to refer to the ‘heartless murder of defenceless women for the sake of Lebensraum.’ Carroll’s refers to ‘irrational cruelty’ and ‘infractions against commonly accepted codes of warfare within the ancient world.’ Smith refers to ‘cold blooded terrorism’ and Polley refers to ‘violations of

(vi) Prophecy against Moab:

This prophecy is interesting because the Lord, who announced judgement against Edom for their crimes against Israel in 1:11b–12b, is now punishing Moab¹²⁵ for their transgressions, not against the Israelites, but against Edom. The Lord charged Moab with burning into lime the bones of the King of Edom (2:1c).¹²⁶ The burning of bones denotes the intensity of the desire for revenge that remains even after the destruction of the enemy.¹²⁷ Whatever the reasons for such vengeance on the part of the Moabites, the Lord punishes them. That the punishment inflicted on Moab for the burning of bones, comes in the form of fire is an interesting twist of fate (וְשָׁלַחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּמוֹאָב).¹²⁸ The fire that razed the strongholds of the Moabites (וְאֶקְלָה אֶרְמֹנֵת הַקְּרִיּוֹת) results in complete and utter destruction. In addition, the declarations that Moab will die in tumult (שָׁאוֹן), in crying (תְּרוּעָה) and in trumpet blasting (שׁוֹפָר בְּקוֹל) in 2:2c appear to predict war. It is ironic that a nation of warmongers would itself become the victim of war¹²⁹ with the Lord removing the judge and killing all her officials.

human rights.’ Martin-Achard states that Yahweh does not pardon this attack on human life and this kind of genocide of a nation. ... Hans Wolff refers to ‘defenceless women and helpless unborn’ similar to Vawters comment that ‘for the sake of few more acres Ammon had slain the unborn.’ Similarly Jeremias refers to the intention of ‘Hinmetzelung keimenden Lebens.’

See Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, “Engendered Warfare and the Ammonites in Amos 1.13,” in Hagedorn and Mein, *Aspects of Amos*, 19–20.

¹²⁵ The Moabites are the relatives of the Ammonites, the descendants of the son of Lot who was conceived through incest with his elder daughter (Gen 19:37).

¹²⁶ Using a number of examples from ancient Near Eastern contexts, Paul A. Kruger reveals the seriousness of the crime of burning bones in Amos 2:1. According to him this is a war crime as is the maltreatment of remains. If terror and humiliation is associated with non-burial then the burning of bones is the worst form of abuse because it completely obliterates the memory of the dead person. Moreover, he notices three aspects of the crime, (i) burning, (ii) specific reference to body part, bones, and above all (iii) bones of the king. See Paul A. Kruger, “Burning the Bones of the Dead as a War Atrocity: A Note on Amos 2:1,” *JSem* 26 (2017): 86–100. Hagedorn observes a double sin here, that of burning bones which is then compounded by opening the tomb, which together bring a curse on the one responsible for that action. He quotes a translation from Sylvan and it goes: “this is the [tomb of Sheban]yahu, royal steward. There is neither silver nor gold [he]re. [on]ly [his bones] and his servant-wife’s bon[es] w[ith] him. Cursed be the man who opens the (tomb).” See Hagedorn, “Edom in the Book of Amos and Beyond,” 48. See also Shaul Bar, “Burning the Bones of the Dead,” *IBS* 30 (2012): 1–10; Saul M. Olyan, *Social Inequality in the World of the Text: The Significance of Ritual and Social Distinctions in the Hebrew Bible*, Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 216.

¹²⁷ It could be an attempt to eliminate all memory of the offender. See Hagedorn, “Edom in the Book of Amos and Beyond,” 48; Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 48. The maltreatment of the remains, especially burning the bones, suggests an attempt at the complete annihilation of the memory of the dead person, a brutal act of war.

¹²⁸ Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 73; Hagedorn, “Edom in the Book of Amos and Beyond,” 49.

¹²⁹ This can be compared to the irony of the fire station burning down to the ground. For a general analysis of various aspects of irony, see Salvatore Attardo, “Irony as Relevant Inappropriateness,” *Journal of Pragmatics*

3.2.2 Warnings for Judah and Israel

(i) Prophecy against Judah:

The prophecy against Judah is notable in that their sins differ from those of the aforementioned nations. Unlike those nations, Judah is judged not for having inflicted cruelties on others, but because of their fracturing of their relationship with the Lord.¹³⁰ They have rejected the law of the Lord (מִצְוֹת יְהוָה),¹³¹ and have not kept his statutes (הָלְכוּ אַבֹתָם),¹³² but instead they followed the sinful ways of their fathers (אֲחֵרֵיהֶם).¹³³ Hence, the Lord sends fire down on them (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בִּיהוּדָה), fire which will devour the strongholds of Jerusalem (וְאָכְלָה אֲרָמֹנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם).¹³⁴

(ii) Prophecy against Israel:

The indictments against Israel are presented in two parts, in 2:6c–8b and in 2:12a–d and their dire situation is predicted in 2:13a–16a. Coming between the two indictments, one small unit (2:9a–11d) serves to remind Israel how graciously the Lord intervened in their lives. The Lord defeated and destroyed the mighty Amorites (2:9a–e),¹³⁵ he brought the Israelites out of Egypt, led them forty years in the wilderness (2:10a–c), and raised up some of them to be prophets and Nazirites (2:11a–b).¹³⁶ Detailing these saving actions of the Lord

32 (2000): 793–826. See also Mitchell Green, “Irony as Expression (of a Sense of the Absurd),” *Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic and Communication* 12 (2017): 1–24.

¹³⁰ Only Judah is condemned because of directly challenging the Lord’s commands; the other nations are judged on the basis of international relations. See John Haralson Hayes, *The Oracles against the Nations in the Old Testament: Their Usage and Theological Importance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 180. Judah was the Lord’s own people enjoying a unique relationship with the Lord, “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” (Exod 6:7) [This quotation is taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)]. See also Snyder, “The Law and Covenant in Amos,” 161.

¹³¹ By rejecting the law of the Lord they risk damaging their relationship with the Lord. See van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15,” 13.

¹³² Wöhrle notices that the words (אב, חקה, תורה, שמר), used to catch attention appear in Amos 2:4 and 2 Kgs 17:13, but do not appear anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible. See Jakob Wöhrle, ““No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones”: The Exilic Book of the Four Prophets (Hos., Am., Mic., Zeph.) as a Concept Opposed to the Deuteronomistic History,” *VT* 58 (2008): 615.

¹³³ van Wieringen proposes that the expression אֲחֵרֵיהֶם אֲבֹתָם suggests that Judah has not only lately become sinful but has not been good for a long time. van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15,” 13.

¹³⁴ Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 54, notes that the burning of the citadels of Jerusalem is the subject of this verse, whereas in 1:2 Jerusalem is mentioned as the abode of the Lord, from where he roars.

¹³⁵ The manner in which the Lord, defeated the Amorites is noteworthy, *I destroyed his fruit from above and his roots from beneath*, this being a metaphor for complete destruction. See Smith, *Amos*, 65–66.

¹³⁶ For an understanding of the Nazirite and the Nazirite vow, see Christine Hahn, “The Understanding of the Nazirite Vow,” in *A God of Faithfulness: Essays in Honour of J. Gordon McConville on His 60th Birthday*, ed.

is particularly significant with their importance further heightened by the rhetorical question, *is this not so, sons of Israel?* in 2:11c–d.¹³⁷

3.2.2.1 Accusations part I (2:6c–8b)

The accusations are as follows:

- Selling the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes (מִכְרָם בַּכֶּסֶף צְדִיק וְאֶבְיוֹן בַּעֲבוּר נַעֲלָיִים).
- Burdening the lowly and turning aside the way of the poor (הַשְׁאָפִים עַל-עֲפֹר־אָרֶץ בְּרֹאשׁ דָּלִים וְדָרָךְ עֲנִוִּים יִטּוּ).¹³⁸
- The man and his father going to the same maid (אִישׁ וְאָבִיו יֵלְכוּ אֶל-הַנַּעֲרָה).
- Stretching out pledged garments beside every altar (וְעַל-בִּגְדֵי חֲבָלִים יִטּוּ אֶצֶל כָּל-מִזְבֵּחַ).
- Drinking the wine taken as fines (וַיִּיּוּ עֲנוּשִׁים יִשְׁתּוּ בֵּית אֱלֹהֵיהֶם).¹³⁹

Each of these actions is unjust and abusive. This wrongdoing is motivated not only by greed,¹⁴⁰ but by an attempt to conceal these atrocities. They think that, once the righteous are sold and expelled from their land, there will be no one to question them and thus they would have licence to continue with their outrageous behaviour.¹⁴¹ The selling of the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals highlights the perversion of justice.¹⁴² The taking advantage of the needy, who are unable to repay their debts, is a merciless act.¹⁴³ Equating

Jamie A. Grant, Alison Lo and Gordon J. Wenham, LHBOTS 538 (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 46–60, for Nazirite in Amos 2:11–12, see pages 56–58.

¹³⁷ Gene M. Tucker, “The Social Location(s) of Amos: Amos 1:3–2:16,” in Ahn and Cook, *Thus Says the Lord*, 278.

¹³⁸ Exod 22:21.

¹³⁹ Exod 22:26–27.

¹⁴⁰ As Hamborg observes, though it is not mentioned whether the amount of silver is small or large, greed is the motivation for this act (2:6a). Graham R. Hamborg, *Still Selling the Righteous: A Redaction-Critical Investigation of Reasons for Judgement in Amos 2:6–16*, LHBOTS 555 (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 204.

¹⁴¹ Cripps’ interpretation is similar. He argues that corrupt judges accept bribes and sell out the righteous. Richard Seymour Cripps, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos* (New York: Macmillan, 1929; London: SPCK, 1960), 140.

¹⁴² Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 56–57, defends the righteous for their innocence saying “he does not deserve this.” The righteous are violated by being: (i) sold into slavery for silver, (ii) sold into slavery for unpaid debts, (iii) forced to pay bribes in the law courts.

¹⁴³ Avi Shevka, “‘For a Pair of Shoes’: A New Light on an Obscure Verse in Amos’ Prophecy,” *VT* 62 (2012): 96, argues that it is not the debt-slavery but the abuse in the law courts and the corruption in the legal process which is designed to trample on the poor which is at issue. Fred Guyette, “Amos the Prophet: A Meditation on the Richness of ‘Justice,’” *JBQ* 36 (2008): 17, he emphasizes, nevertheless that legality does not equate with justice.

the value of the marginalized with that of a pair of sandals is even worse.¹⁴⁴ This highlights how they belittled those in need.¹⁴⁵ This attitude to the poor and the needy is confirmed by their acts of trampling the heads of the poor into the dust of the earth and casting the afflicted to one side.¹⁴⁶ The victims of abuse are צַדִּיק (*the righteous*, 2:6c), וְאֶבְיֹן (*the needy*, 2:6d), דָּלִים (*the lowly*, 2:7a), and עֲנִיִּים (*the poor*, 2:7b),¹⁴⁷ who together constitute the underprivileged.¹⁴⁸ Over and over again the disrespect and disdain shown for the penniless is to be seen.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, the son and his father going to the same maid is an outrageous and degrading act, grossly offending the Lord. The implication is that the crimes of Israel are not only private concerns, but are an insult to the Lord and the violation of the Torah.¹⁵⁰ Exploitation is again seen in their act of stretching out pledged garments (בְּגָדִים חֲבָלִים) and drinking the wine obtained illegally (וַיִּין עֲנוּשִׁים) in the house of their God.¹⁵¹ The fact that what they gained by their unjust acts was for their own gratification rather than out of necessity, adds to the gravity of their sins (2:8b). It is clear that their behaviour does not in any way accord with the message of the Torah.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁴ Shveka, “‘For a Pair of Shoes’,” 97, 99–103, says that concerning using shoes as an analogy for something of little value there is no solid evidence supporting this interpretation. He proposes that the capture by physical force and the handing over by slaves-catchers, or officers of the law of the runaway slaves into the hands of their masters is indeed a violation of the law documented in Deuteronomy, “You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you” (Deut 23:15).

¹⁴⁵ Shveka, “‘For a Pair of Shoes’,” 97, identifies injustice in the act of selling the righteous for silver, and cruelty in the selling of the needy for a pair of shoes.

¹⁴⁶ Luciano R. Peterlevitz, “Amós: O Profeta, o Contexto e o Texto,” *Revista Theos* 6 (2011): 10, perceives it as physical violence against the weak, either the violence of master against slave or the violence perpetrated by the army of Jeroboam against the weak. That there is violence against the weak is undisputed.

¹⁴⁷ Guyette, “Amos the Prophet,” 17, provides a concise explanation of *evyonim*, *anavim*, *tzadik*, *dallim*, the words that are used in Amos to describe the plight of the poor of Israel.

¹⁴⁸ Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 55; Aron Pinker, “Observations on Some Cruxes in Amos – Part I,” *JBL* 29 (2001): 22.

¹⁴⁹ See Hamborg, *Still Selling the Righteous*, 212, who points out that this accusation, is to do with (i) an illegal act, (ii) a lack of mercy and compassion, (iii) feasting while having no thought for the poor whose garments they hold.

¹⁵⁰ The word תורה only appears in the prophecy against Judah (2:4), where the reference is to the Lord’s command, however, in judging Israel, a detailed account of their wrongdoing is provided. This too is a rejection of תורה. See Thomas Renz, “Torah in the Minor Prophets,” in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, ed. J.G. McConville and Karl Möller, LHBOTS 461 (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 83–84.

¹⁵¹ Robin Wakely, “חבל,” *NIDOTTE* 2:6–11, explains various applications of the term חבל (*take in pledge*), in particular, in regard to Amos 2:8.

¹⁵² van Wieringen, “The Triple-Layered Communication in the Book of Amos and its Message of Non-Appropriation Theology,” 94, observes that the elite of the Northern Kingdom act against the Torah, which demands support and freedom for the poor by quoting Lev 25:39.

3.2.2.2 Accusations part II (2:12a–d)

The accusations are as follows:

- Tempting the Nazirites to drink wine (וּתְשִׁקּוּ אֶת־הַנְּזִירִים יַיִן).
- Commanding the prophets not to prophesy (לֹא תִנְבְּאוּ).

The Israelites compelled the Nazirites to drink wine and thus to break their vows to the Lord.¹⁵³ Likewise, they commanded the prophets not to prophesy, thereby forbidding them from carrying out their divine call.¹⁵⁴ These actions of Israel in 2:12a–d are antithetical to the actions of the Lord because of the fact that it was the Lord who had raised up the Nazirites, who were expected to uphold the law,¹⁵⁵ and the prophets whose calling it was to testify for the Lord (2:11a–b).

In contrast to the other nations, the Lord does not specify the punishment that is to be inflicted on Israel. However, it is clear from 2:13a–16a that it will be severe. The word הִנֵּה (*behold*) in 2:13a is a signal of the immediacy of whatever is about to happen. Also the verb עֹק used repeatedly in 2:13a and again in 2:13b, combined with the analogy of a cart loaded with sheaves jerking (כְּאֶשֶׁר תַּעֲיֶק הָעֲגֵלָה הַמְלֵאָה לָהּ עֲמִיר) points to a perilous situation.¹⁵⁶ Added to this, the vocabulary used, such as אָבַד (*to perish*) in 2:14a, וְחֵזֶק לֹא־יֵאֲמָץ כָּחוֹ (*the strong, will not retain his strength*) in 2:14b, לֹא־יִמְלֹט נַפְשׁוֹ (*will not deliver himself*) in 2:14c, 2:15b and 15c, לֹא יַעֲמֹד (*will not stand*) in 2:15a, and עָרוֹם יָנוּס (*will flee naked*) in 2:16a, suggest that conditions in Israel were about to seriously deteriorate. The uncertainty surrounding the future of Israel heightens the tension.¹⁵⁷ One thing made clear, however, is that no matter

¹⁵³ Num 6:2–3.

¹⁵⁴ Deut 18:18.

¹⁵⁵ Israelites forcefully demand that the Nazirites drink the wine and then having coerced them, they inflict on them punishments for having done so (for forced consumption of drink, cf. Exod 32:20; Num 5:11–31). See Saul M. Olyan, “Ritual Inversion in Biblical Representations of Punitive Rites,” in *Worship, Women, and War: Essays in Honor of Susan Niditch*, ed. John J. Collins, T. M. Lemos and Saul M. Olyan, BJS 357 (Providence, RI: Brown University, 2015), 141–42; Duane L. Christensen, “The Prosodic Structure of Amos 1–2,” *HTR* 67 (1974): 436.

¹⁵⁶ The judgement is comparable to a wagon full of sheaves toppling and crushing everything underneath it. See David A. Hubbard, *Joel and Amos: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 25 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 153.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas Edward McComiskey, “The Hymnic Elements of the Prophecy of Amos: A Study of Form-Critical Methodology,” *JETS* 30 (1987): 143, who remarks that the lack of clarity in the description increases the menace because of the awe, unreliability and terrible instability it generates. It is sure and yet indefinite and in that lies its awesome power.

how strong, brave or swift they are or how good their horsemen or weapons are, none will be able to withstand the might of the Lord.

3.2.3 Visit All Your Iniquities

The verbal foreground form *שָׁמַעַי* in 3:1a establishes a syntactic link between units 1:3–2:16 and 3:1–2. Both these units are also connected semantically by the theme of judgement. The prophet invites the sons of Israel to hear the word of the Lord and this invitation suggests the existence of a strong bond between the Lord and the sons of Israel. This is confirmed by the expressions *I brought up from the land of Egypt* in 3:1e and *you only I have known of all the families of the earth* in 3:2a. However, paradoxically, these words become the reason for the judgement declared, *therefore I will visit you for all your iniquities* (3:2b).¹⁵⁸ This paradox is underlined by the words *יָדַע* (*to know*),¹⁵⁹ and *פָּקַד* (*to visit*).¹⁶⁰ In this context, the word *יָדַע*, with God as subject,¹⁶¹ reveals a close relationship between the Lord and the sons of Israel,¹⁶² with *פָּקַד* indicating the intention to punish.¹⁶³ As the verb *פָּקַד* is used in the negative sense, it confirms that *עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם* (*iniquities*) is the object. The chosen people Israel not only received special blessing, but also had a great responsibility to remain faithful to the Lord.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, as the ones known to the Lord have broken that trust, they must be punished for their failures. This sharpens the tone in the judgement made against them *you only I have known of all the families of the earth therefore I will visit you for all your iniquities*.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ Robin Routledge, “Creation and Covenant: God’s Direct Relationship with the Non-Israelite Nations in the Old Testament,” in *Interreligious Relations: Biblical Perspectives: Proceedings from the Second Norwegian Summer Academy of Biblical Studies (NSABS), Ansgar University College, Kristiansand, Norway, August 2015*, ed. Hallvard Hagelia and Markus Zehnder, T&T Clark Biblical Studies (London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), 60; Mark Daniel Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos: Prophetic Poetics in Latin American Perspective*, JSOTSup 132 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 185.

¹⁵⁹ Terence E. Fretheim, “יָדַע,” *NIDOTTE* 2:409–14, explores various meanings of יָדַע.

¹⁶⁰ Tyler F. Williams, “פָּקַד,” *NIDOTTE* 3:657–63.

¹⁶¹ Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 2:411.

¹⁶² Leslie C. Allen, “Amos, Prophet of Solidarity,” *VE* 6 (1969): 49.

¹⁶³ Williams, *NIDOTTE* 3:659.

¹⁶⁴ Daniel J. Simundson, “Reading Amos: Is It an Advantage to Be God’s Special People?” *Word & World* 28 (2008): 134–35.

¹⁶⁵ However, this punitive language is meant as a deterrent, rather than being retributive. See Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets: An Introduction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 187; Bernhard W. Anderson, *The Eighth Century Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 33.

3.2.4 Summary

place/ nation	transgression	punishment
Damascus (1:3–5)	annihilation of Gilead	fire, breaking bar, dethronement, exile
Gaza (1:6–8)	deportation and selling into slavery	fire, dethronement, destruction
Tyre (1:9–10)	deportation and selling into slavery, violated covenant	fire
Edom (1:11–12)	violence, lack of compassion, anger and wrath	fire
Ammon (1:13–15)	extreme violence	fire, exile
Moab (2:1–3)	vandalism	fire, dethronement, slaughter
Judah (2:4–5)	rejection of the Lord	fire
Israel (2:6–16)	exploitation, debauchery, profanities, rejection of the Lord	crushing, defencelessness

- There are eight prophecies in all, each beginning with the same divine speech formula בַּה אָמַר יְהוָה (1:3, 6, 9, 11; 2:1, 4, 6), followed by the words of the Lord.
- The divine decision at the beginning of each and every prophecy לֹא אֲשִׁיבָנָהּ (I will not revoke it) is crucial, in that no word of consolation or promise can be found.
- The transgressions of the nations are the reasons for the judgements made against them, attested by the expression *for the three transgressions of [nation] and for four I will not revoke it* (1:3b, 6b, 9b, 11b; 2:1b, 4b, and 6b).
- The six nations who are punished for their crimes can be divided into two groups as they relate to Israel:
 - (i) Blood relatives (Edom – through Esau, Ammon and Moab – through Lot).
 - (ii) Non-blood relatives (Damascus, Gaza and Tyre).

- The transgressions of Damascus and Ammon are against Gilead. Damascus threshed Gilead, while Ammon ripped open their pregnant women (1:3c, 13c–d).
- The iniquities of Gaza and Tyre relate to Edom. Both of these nations handed over the Israelites as captives to Edom (1:6c–d, 9c–d).
- Both Judah and Israel are punished for rejecting the Lord, with Israel also being held to account for their unjust acts towards the poor (2:4c–f, 6c–8b, 12a–d).
- Based on the description of the crime and punishment, the nations can be categorized into two:
 - (i) Those whose crimes are described in detail (Tyre, Edom, Judah and Israel).
 - (ii) Those whose punishments are comprehensively described (Damascus, Gaza, Ammon, Moab).¹⁶⁶
- All of the eight nations are punished for their transgressions in various ways. Nevertheless, punishment in the form of fire is common (1:4a, 7a, 10a, 12a, 14a; 2:2a, 5a) and affects all the nations except Israel. No precise punishment is mentioned for Israel, but rather, the setting of the punishments is presented in a vague and general manner.
- Unit 3:1a–2b marks the climax of the prophecies as it contains the divine judgement concerning the sons of Israel.

3.3 TEXT-PRAGMATICS: AMOS 1:3–3:2

Communication in Amos 1:3–3:2 has several aspects. As the semantic analysis shows, the prophecies concerning the nations can be divided into two categories: (i) familial group – Edom, Ammon, and Moab, (ii) non-familial group – Damascus, Gaza and Tyre. The pragmatic analysis will be based on this categorization and will address the following questions: (a) who is communicating the messages (speaker)? (b) to whom are they directed (addressee)? (c) who is in receipt of the messages and how do they react to them? and (d) how efficient is the communication between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader?

¹⁶⁶ Hasel, *Understanding the Book of Amos*, 63, points out that by the detailed description of wrongdoings, the crimes are highlighted and by the enhanced description of the impending disasters, the punishments are highlighted.

3.3.1 Communication: Edom, Ammon and Moab

The prophecies against these three nations are to be found where direct speech is used: Edom (1:11a–12b), Ammon (1:13a–15b), Moab (2:1a–3c). The introductory divine speech formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (*thus said the LORD*) that introduces each of these direct speeches proposes two things.

(i) The presence of the text-immanent author as he renders this direct speech and (ii) the Lord is the actual speaker. The text-immanent author realizes the seriousness of the warning in the declaration לֹא אֲשַׁכֵּנּוּ (I will not revoke it). Equally, the Lord appearing in the 'I'-figure form in the expressions לֹא אֲשַׁכֵּנּוּ (1:11b, 13b; 2:15b), וְשָׁלַחְתִּי אֶשׁ (1:12a; 2:2a), וְהָצַתִּי אֶשׁ (1:14a) reveals the gravity of his actions. Even though these nations had been forewarned, it is strange that the Lord does not address them directly. Consequently, it could imply that the warnings pronounced are not intended for them. Therefore, it becomes necessary to explore the possibility that the text-immanent reader could be the addressee. However, the suggestion that the text-immanent reader is present is dismissed because of the absence of a second person form in these units. It is clear that the text-immanent author addresses no one, neither the text-immanent reader nor Edom, Ammon or Moab.

3.3.2 Communication: Damascus, Gaza and Tyre

Again, direct speech is employed in these prophecies: Damascus (1:3a–5e), Gaza (6a–8e) and Tyre (9a–10b). All the direct speech units have the same introductory formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (*thus said the LORD*), leaving no doubt that the Lord is the speaker. This divine speech formula also confirms the presence of the text-immanent author as it is he who renders the direct speech of the Lord. For whom are these prophecies intended? Even though Damascus, Gaza and Tyre are accused and condemned for what they have done, none of these nations are directly addressed. In other words, the prophecies are about them, but not spoken to them. The text-immanent author does not address the text-immanent reader either, because the 'you'-figure is nowhere to be found in 1:3a–5e, 6a–8e or 9a–10b.

3.3.3 Communication: Judah and Israel

The prophecies against Judah and Israel in 2:4a–5b and 6a–16b come in the form of direct speech. The presence of the speech formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (*thus said the LORD*) in 2:4a and 2:6a

makes it undeniable that, in these prophecies, the Lord is the speaker and the text-immanent author renders the direct speech. In each of the prophecies, a nation is condemned for its transgressions and then punished, Damascus (1:3a–5e), Gaza (1:6a–8e), Tyre (1:9a–10b), Edom (1:11a–12b), Ammon (1:13a–15b), and Moab (2:1a–3c). Once again, the Lord does not directly address these nations, but speaks about them. However, a change in this pattern occurs in the prophecies against Judah and Israel, where an addressee in the form of a ‘you’-figure appears. Precisely, an addressee is found in the form of a second person plural in 2:10 (אַתָּם).¹⁶⁷ This is significant as it is the first time an addressee appears in any of the prophecies. The identity of the ‘you’-figure is revealed to be Israel. The crimes of Israel as previously exposed in 2:6b–8b confirm this. But Judah could also be addressed in the ‘you’-figure because it was not only the Israelites, but also the people of Judah who were brought out of Egypt and were given possession of the land of the Amorites (2:10a–11e). Apart from this, the text-immanent reader can also be included in אַתָּם in 2:10a because of the fact that the identity of the ‘you’-figure is not disclosed.¹⁶⁸ Thus, the text-immanent reader is included in the communication process by means of the communication with Israel and Judah.¹⁶⁹

The appearance of the addressee in 2:10 as the ‘you’-figure suggests three different levels of communication: communication with Judah, communication with Israel and finally communication with the text-immanent reader. The inclusion of Judah as an addressee in אַתָּם changes the situation as their crimes are now deemed to be even more deplorable. Judah realizes that the accusations and punishments announced against Edom, Ammon, Moab, Damascus, Gaza and Tyre are meant as a warning for them as well. Moreover, the rejection of the law and statutes of the Lord put their relationship with the Lord in great

¹⁶⁷ van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15,” 11; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 206; Tim Bulkeley, “The Book of Amos as “Prophetic Fiction”: Describing the Genre of a Written Work that Reinvigorates Older Oral Speech Forms,” in *The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Michael H. Floyd, and Colin M. Toffelmire, ANEM 10 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 218.

¹⁶⁸ van Wieringen emphasizes this remark noting that the ‘you’-figure referred to in verse 10 is introduced anonymously. According to him the ‘you’ refers to those who were brought by the Lord out of Egypt and settled in the promised land. van Wieringen, “The Prophecies against the Nations in Amos 1:2–3:15,” 17.

¹⁶⁹ Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 200.

peril.¹⁷⁰ As in the case of the nations who attacked Israel, Judah is punished with a devastating fire. The situation of the text-immanent reader is no better, as punishment in the form of fire and destruction would also apply in this case if a transgression were to occur. This leads to the realization that all forms of wrongdoing must be avoided.

Israel, being well aware of the link between sin and judgement, is no longer able to shirk its responsibility for its actions.¹⁷¹ After having their crimes exposed the Lord addresses them in the ‘you’-figure form in 2:10a reminding them of the blessings which they had received. That they rejected the prophets and abused the Nazirites is an indication of the disdain with which they treated the Lord. The following representation illustrates the effectiveness of the communication with Israel.¹⁷²

‘I’— blessing (2:9–11): exterminated the Amorite, destroyed his fruit, brought you up
from the land of Egypt

question (2:11c–d): is it not so, sons of Israel?

‘You’— rejection (2:12): made the Nazirites drink wine, commanded the prophets not to
prophecy

The rhetorical question in 2:11c to the sons of Israel reinforces the communication to Israel in two ways. (i) By coming immediately after the interventions of the Lord, Israel is forced to acknowledge the graciousness of the Lord.¹⁷³ (ii) The rhetorical question, placed as it is between the benevolent works of the Lord and the subsequent wrongdoing of Israel, not only illustrates how Israel treats these works with contempt but also how the prophets and Nazirites were met with scorn.¹⁷⁴ Even though it is a fact that the Lord did not send fire down upon Israel as a punishment, the situation described in 2:14b–16a is one of utter chaos. As the presence of the addressee, the ‘you’-figure as *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* is firmly established, the

¹⁷⁰ Andrew M. King, “Among the Nations: The Function of the Oracle against Judah in Amos’s Religious Polemic,” *ETS* (2015): 18–19, notes that the prophecy against Judah introduces something new in that Judah’s crimes were exclusively vertical, a development which deepens the rhetorical effect of the communication.

¹⁷¹ John Barton, *Amos’s Oracles against the Nations: A Study of Amos 1.3–2.5*, SOTSMS 6 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 6.

¹⁷² James L. Mays et al., eds., *Harper’s Bible Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 722, mentions the contrasting effects of the ‘I’ and the ‘you’ statements.

¹⁷³ The question as posed could elicit one answer only, forcing Israel to sign their own judgement papers. See Hubbard, *Joel and Amos*, 151.

¹⁷⁴ Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 68.

seriousness of the communication with Israel is raised to a level on a par with that which exists between Judah and the text-immanent reader. The prophecy against Israel in 2:16b concludes with the speech formula *נֹאֲמֵי־יְהוָה*. However, the ‘you’-figure as *יְשָׁרְאֵל* appears again in 3:1. Notably, there is a different speaker here. The opening expression *שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר* (hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you) confirms that it is no longer the Lord but the prophet who speaks. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the words spoken to the sons of Israel are the words of the Lord, *therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities*.

In brief, the communication in the prophecies against the nations could be perceived in various ways:

- (i) By not addressing the six neighbouring nations directly, a curiosity about the identity of the addressee is sustained. This strategy, however, could for the real addressee, have the unwelcome consequence of arousing negative emotions prior to they themselves being condemned.¹⁷⁵
- (ii) Initially, the prophecies against the other nations are not a cause for concern for Judah and Israel. Indeed they may well have agreed that these nations deserve to be punished.¹⁷⁶ However, it comes as a devastating blow to find themselves also being indicted.¹⁷⁷
- (iii) Israel and Judah are no better than any of their neighbours.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 12; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 206; Guyette, “Amos the Prophet,” Hayes, *The Oracles against the Nations in the Old Testament*, 17, who considers this act of the prophet who is called to preach to Israel rather than speak about other countries, as a homiletical scheme to engage the attention of the listeners. Barton describes it as Amos’ rhetorical deception to produce shock and alarm in the intended listeners. See John Barton, *Understanding Old Testament Ethics: Approaches and Explorations* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 79.

¹⁷⁶ Barton, *Understanding Old Testament Ethics*, 79, because they feel that sin and judgement are rightly linked, this in turn creates for them a difficult situation from which to free themselves.

¹⁷⁷ Viberg, “Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony,” 108; Ferry Y. Mamahit and Pieter M. Venter, “Oracle against Israel’s Social Injustices: A Rhetorical Analysis of Amos 2:6–8,” *HTS Teologiese Studies* 66 (2010): 10. James R. Linville, “What Does ‘It’ Mean? Interpretation at the Point of No Return in Amos 1–2,” *BibInt* 8 (2000): 408, who describes that the teeth in the prophecies against the nations are the final two prophecies against Judah and Israel. The placing of Israel last in the series of prophecies, increases the bitterness against the Northern Kingdom. Reeds, describes this final stroke to Israel as an inferno while the prophecies against other nations were but tiny flames. Reed Lessing, “Upsetting the Status Quo: Preaching Like Amos,” *CTM* 33 (2007): 289; Simundson, “Reading Amos: Is It an Advantage to Be God’s Special People?” 134.

¹⁷⁸ Whatever sense of superiority Israel might have harboured when they saw their neighbours being punished for their wrongdoings, is well and truly shattered when they are brought to realize that their own sins are equally as evil. See Barton, *Understanding Old Testament Ethics*, 79; William R. Osborne, “A Review Article

(iv) Judgements are made against the non-familial group of nations (Damascus, Gaza, Tyre) first of all, followed by the familial group (Edom, Ammon, Moab). This is a clear indication that when it comes to paying retributions for transgressing against the Lord, no favouritism is shown.¹⁷⁹ Both relatives and strangers are called to account.

(v) Geographically speaking, the effectiveness of the communication is heightened by the course of the judgements as they pass through the nations. Beginning in the northeast (Damascus), they follow a course through the southwest (Gaza), the northwest (Tyre), the southeast (Edom), the Transjordan states (Ammon and Moab), then on to Judah, and finally end in Israel.¹⁸⁰ The fact that Israel is the last to be punished could well have left them with the expectation that they would be spared.

(vi) As the chosen people, the inclusion of Judah and Israel in the list of condemned nations increases the seriousness of the communication with them.¹⁸¹

of John Barton's 'Amos's Oracles against the Nations,' 2011, www.lawprophetsandwritings.com, 2; Stulman and Kim, *You Are My People*, 198.

¹⁷⁹ Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 197.

¹⁸⁰ See this geographical structure of the prophecies in Steinmann, "The Order of Amos's Oracles Against the Nations," 687; a visualization of this in Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, "Amos 1:2 – 3:15: Profetie als Zelfkritiek," in *Verborgen Lezers: Over Tekst en Communicatie in het Oude Testament*, ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, Theologische Perspectieven Supplement Series 2 (Bergambacht: 2VM Uitgeverij, 2011), 77; Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 17; James D. Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea—Jonah*, SHBC (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011), 279; Jack R. Lundbom, "The Lion Has Roared: Rhetorical Structure in Amos 1:2–3:8," in *Milk and Honey: Essays on Ancient Israel and the Bible in Appreciation of the Judaic Studies Program at the University of California, San Diego*, ed. Sarah Malena and David Miano (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 70.

¹⁸¹ Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 148; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 198.

3.3.4 Summary

The following table illustrates the communication elements in 1:3–3:2.

prophecies against the nations			
	speaker	nation involved	addressee
text-immanent author (1:3a–3:2b)	the Lord	Edom (1:11a–12b)	no addressee
	[כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה]	Ammon (1:13a–15b)	no addressee
		Moab (2:1a–3c)	no addressee
	the Lord	Damascus (1:3a–5e)	no addressee
	[כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה]	Gaza (1:6a–8e)	no addressee
		Tyre (1:9a–10b)	no addressee
	the Lord	Judah (2:4a–5b)	no addressee
	[כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה]	Israel (2:6a–16b)	אֲתֶכֶם (<i>you</i>)
			[Judah, Israel, text-immanent reader]
	prophet	————	בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
	[שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה]		

- In unit 1:3–3:2 there are eight prophecies against the nations, each containing direct speech of the Lord. In each case the direct speech is introduced with a similar divine speech formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה attesting the Lord as speaker and the text-immanent author as the one rendering the direct speech. Also included is one unit of direct speech of the character Amos as he addresses the sons of Israel. The opening formula שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה in 3:1a and the vocative בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in 3:1c confirm Amos as the speaker and the sons of Israel as the addressee.
- Though each prophecy contains a message of divine punishment, in none of these prophecies, except in the case of Judah and Israel, are the nations addressed either by the Lord or by the text-immanent author.
- An addressee is revealed for the first time in 2:10 in the form of a ‘you’-figure and is confirmed in 2:11d to be בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.
- There are three communication levels in the prophecies against the nations, communication with (i) Judah, (ii) Israel, and (iii) text-immanent reader.

3.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The following table illustrates what the Lord said about the six nations followed by his communication with Judah and Israel.

(i) about Damascus (1:3a–5e)

for three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not revoke it (עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי דַמְשָׁק וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ)
because they have threshed Gilead with iron threshing sledges (עַל־דּוֹשָׁם בְּחַרְצוֹת הַבָּרָזִל אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד)
so I will send fire down on the house of Hazael (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּבֵית חֲזָאֵל)
I will break the bar of Damascus (וְשִׁבְרְתִי בָרִיחַ דַּמְשָׁק)
and I will cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven and the one who holds the staff from Beth-Eden (וְהִכְרַתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מִבְּקַעְת־אָוֶן וְתוֹמֵךְ שֵׁבֶט מִבֵּית עֵדֶן)
and the people of Aram will be exiled to Kir (וְגִלּוּ עַם־אַרָם קִירָה)

(ii) about Gaza (1:6a–8e)

for three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not revoke it (עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי עֵזָה וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ)
because they carried into exile entire communities to deliver to Edom (עַל־הַגְלוֹתָם גְּלוֹת שְׁלֵמָה לְהַסְגִּיר לְאֲדוֹם)
so I will send fire down on the wall of Gaza (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּחוֹמַת עֵזָה)
I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod and the one who holds the staff from Ashkelon (וְהִכְרַתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מֵאֲשְׁדּוֹד וְתוֹמֵךְ שֵׁבֶט מֵאֲשַׁקְלוֹן)
and I will turn my hand against Ekron (וְהִשִּׁיבֹתִי יָדִי עַל־עֶקְרוֹן)

(iii) about Tyre: (1:9a–10b)

for three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not revoke it (עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי־צָר וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ)
because they delivered entire communities to Edom (עַל־הַסְגִּירָם גְּלוֹת שְׁלֵמָה לְאֲדוֹם)
and did not remember the covenant of kinship (וְלֹא זָכְרוּ בְרִית אֲחִים)
I will send fire down on the wall of Tyre (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּחוֹמַת צָר)

(iv) about Edom: (1:11a–12b)

for three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke it (על־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי אֶדוֹם וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ)
because he pursued his brother with the sword and he ruined all his compassion (עַל־רִדְפוֹ בְּחֶרֶב אָחִיו וְשָׁחַת רַחֲמָיו)
and perpetually maintained his anger and kept his arrogance forever (וַיִּטְרֹף לְעַד אָפוֹ וַעֲבָרְתּוֹ שְׁמֶרָה נָצַח)
so I will send fire down on Teman (וַיִּשְׁלַחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּתִימָן)

(v) about Ammon: (1:13a–15b)

for three transgressions of Ammon, and for four, I will not revoke it (עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי אֶדוֹם וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ)
because of their splitting open pregnant women of Gilead in order to widen their border (עַל־בִּקְעָם הָרוֹת הַגִּלְעָד לְמַעַן הִרְחִיב אֶת־גְּבוּלָם)
I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah (וַהֲצַתִּי אֵשׁ בְּחוֹמַת רַבָּה)
and their king shall go into exile, he and his officials together (וְהָלַךְ מֶלֶכָם בְּגוֹלָה הוּא וְשָׂרָיו יַחְדָּו)

(vi) about Moab: (2:1a–3c)

for three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not revoke it (עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי מוֹאָב וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ)
because he burned the bones of the King of Edom into lime (עַל־שָׂרְפוֹ עֲצָמוֹת מֶלֶךְ־אֶדוֹם לַשֵּׂיד)
I will send fire down into Moab (וַיִּשְׁלַחְתִּי־אֵשׁ בְּמוֹאָב)
and I will cut off the judge from her midst (וְהִכַּרְתִּי שׁוֹפֵט מִקֶּרְבָּהּ)
and I will kill all her princes with him (וְכָל־שָׂרֶיהָ אֶהְרֹג עִמּוֹ)

The above table shows what the Lord communicated about the nations, namely, the declaration that he would not withdraw his indictment or revoke the punishments. The Lord pinpoints the transgressions of each nation. Damascus and Ammon are condemned for their cruelty to Gilead. Gaza and Tyre are accused of sending entire communities into captivity.

Tyre also broke the covenant of kinship.¹⁸² Edom retained his anger forever and pursued his brother with the sword. The burning of the bones of the King of Edom, by the Moabites, is proof of the extreme dislike they had of the Edomites. All of these transgressions result in punishment by the Lord.¹⁸³ Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab cannot escape the devouring fire sent down by the Lord. Their princes, judges and all those who provide security will perish. Total destruction and desolation awaits them, and neither comfort nor promise of restoration is offered. The repeated declaration that the Lord will not reverse his decision to punish (*for three transgressions of ... and for four, I will not revoke it*) in 1:3b, 6b, 9b, 11b, 13b and 2:1b heightens the concern among the nations. However, it can be inferred that since the Lord has not directly addressed any of these nations, they have nothing to worry about. But the question of whom the Lord is communicating with remains unanswered.

The following table illustrates the Lord's communication with Judah and Israel.

(i) with Judah (2:4a–5b)

for three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke it (על־שלושה פְּשָׁעֵי יְהוּדָה וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֵנּוּ)
because they have rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept his statutes (עַל־מִצְוָתָיו אֲתִירְתוּ יְהוָה וְחֻקָּיו לֹא שָׁמְרוּ)
and their lies caused them to err that they walked after their fathers (וַיִּתְּעוּם כְּזָבִיהֶם אֲשֶׁר־הִלְכוּ אַבֹּתָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם)
so I will send fire down on Judah (וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֵשׁ בְּיְהוּדָה)

(ii) with Israel (2:6a–3:2b)

for three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke it (עַל־שלושה פְּשָׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל־אַרְבָּעָה לֹא אֲשִׁיבֵנּוּ)
they sold the righteous for silver (עַל־מִכְרָם בְּכֶסֶף צְדִיק)
the needy for a pair of shoes (וְאֶבְיוֹן בְּעֶבֶר נַעֲלִים)
panting for the dust of the earth on the head of the poor

¹⁸² As elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, violation of the covenant is a serious offence against the Lord and will be avenged. (cf. 1 Kgs 11:11; Isa 24:5; Lev 26:15; Josh 7:11, 15; Judg 2:20).

¹⁸³ “God is always on the side of the victims of both military aggression and social violence.” See R. Kessler, “The Crimes of the Nations in Amos 1–2,” *AcT* 26 (2018): 218.

(הַשְׂאָפִים עַל־עַפְר־אַרְץ בְּרֹאשׁ דָּלִים)
and turn aside the way of the poor (וְדָרָךְ עֲנוּיִם יִטּוּ)
and the man and his father go to the same maid so as to profane my holy name (וְאִישׁ וְאָבִיו יָלְכוּ אֶל־הַנַּעֲרָה לְמַעַן חָלֵל אֶת־שֵׁם קְדוֹשִׁי)
and they stretch out pledged garments beside every altar (וְעַל־בִּגְדֵי־חֻבֻּלִים יִטּוּ אֶצְל כָּל־מִזְבֵּחַ)
and they drink wine paid by fines in the house of their God (וַיִּין עֲנוּשִׁים יִשְׁתּוּ בֵּית אֱלֹהֵיהֶם)
but I myself exterminated the Amorite from their faces (וְאֲנֹכִי הִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֶת־הָאֲמֹרִי מִפְּנֵיהֶם)
and I destroyed his fruit from above and his roots from beneath (וְאֲשָׁמִיד פְּרִיו מִמַּעַל וְשָׂרְשָׁיו מִתַּחַת)
also I brought you out from the land of Egypt (וְאֲנֹכִי הֵעֲלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם)
and led you forty years in the wilderness (וְאוֹלֹךְ אֶתְכֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה)
and I raised up prophets from your sons (וְאָקִים מִבְּנֵיכֶם לְנָבִיאִים)
and Nazirites from your young men (וּמִבְּחֹרֵיכֶם לְנָזִירִים)
is this not so, sons of Israel? (הֲאֵף אֵי־זֹאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)
but you made the Nazirites drink wine (וְתִשְׁקוּ אֶת־הַנָּזִירִים יַיִן)
and commanded the prophets you shall not prophesy (וְעַל־הַנָּבִיאִים צִוִּיתֶם לֹא תִנָּבְאוּ)
see, I make totter under you ... (הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מַעִיָּק תַּחְתִּיכֶם) (2:13b–16a)
that I brought up from the land of Egypt (אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם)
רק אֶתְכֶם יָדַעְתִּי מִכָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה (הָאָדָמָה)
therefore, I will visit upon you all your iniquities (עַל־כֵּן אֶפְקֹד עֲלֵיכֶם אֵת כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵיכֶם)

It is important to note the differences in the manner in which the Lord communicates with the nations. When issuing accusations and judgements the Lord speaks directly to Judah and Israel, but regarding the other six nations, where he speaks about them, there is no direct communication. This is a clear indication of the special position given to Judah and Israel as the chosen people (*you only have I known of all the families of the earth*, 3:2a). However, whatever the Lord pronounced against Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab

equally applies to them. Having received blessings from the Lord, there is a greater responsibility for them not to transgress, and their sins are considered to be extremely great. Judah had been given the law and statutes of the Lord, however, the prophecy against Judah attests to how they have erred and rejected the Lord. That response of the Lord will be devastating, *I will send fire upon Judah and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem* (2:5a–b).

Regarding Israel, the Lord lays before them a comprehensive list of their crimes (2:6–8, 12). He reminds them of all he did for them and of the compassion has shown them (2:9–11), and how they refused to act accordingly towards the impoverished. Their divine selection as the chosen people is no defence against punishments.¹⁸⁴ Seeing how they prohibited the prophets from prophesying and that they failed in their responsibility to pay heed to the prophetic call, engaging instead in behaviour that was nothing short of an affront to his authority, the Lord, having had his ire aroused, promises that he will reduce them to nothingness (2:13–16, 3:2b). This devastating response from the Lord along with the increasing intensity in his voice, is designed to cause tremors among his listeners. He gives Israel a reminder that nothing can be hidden from him and that nothing will be overlooked, *therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities* (3:2b). Even though no specific punishment is mentioned here, the implication is that it will be extensive. Adding to the sense of anxiety among the people is the realization that not only is the Lord acting as judge but is also the executor of the punishments.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Mays et al., eds., *Harper's Bible Commentary*, 721–22.

¹⁸⁵ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 185.

CHAPTER FOUR

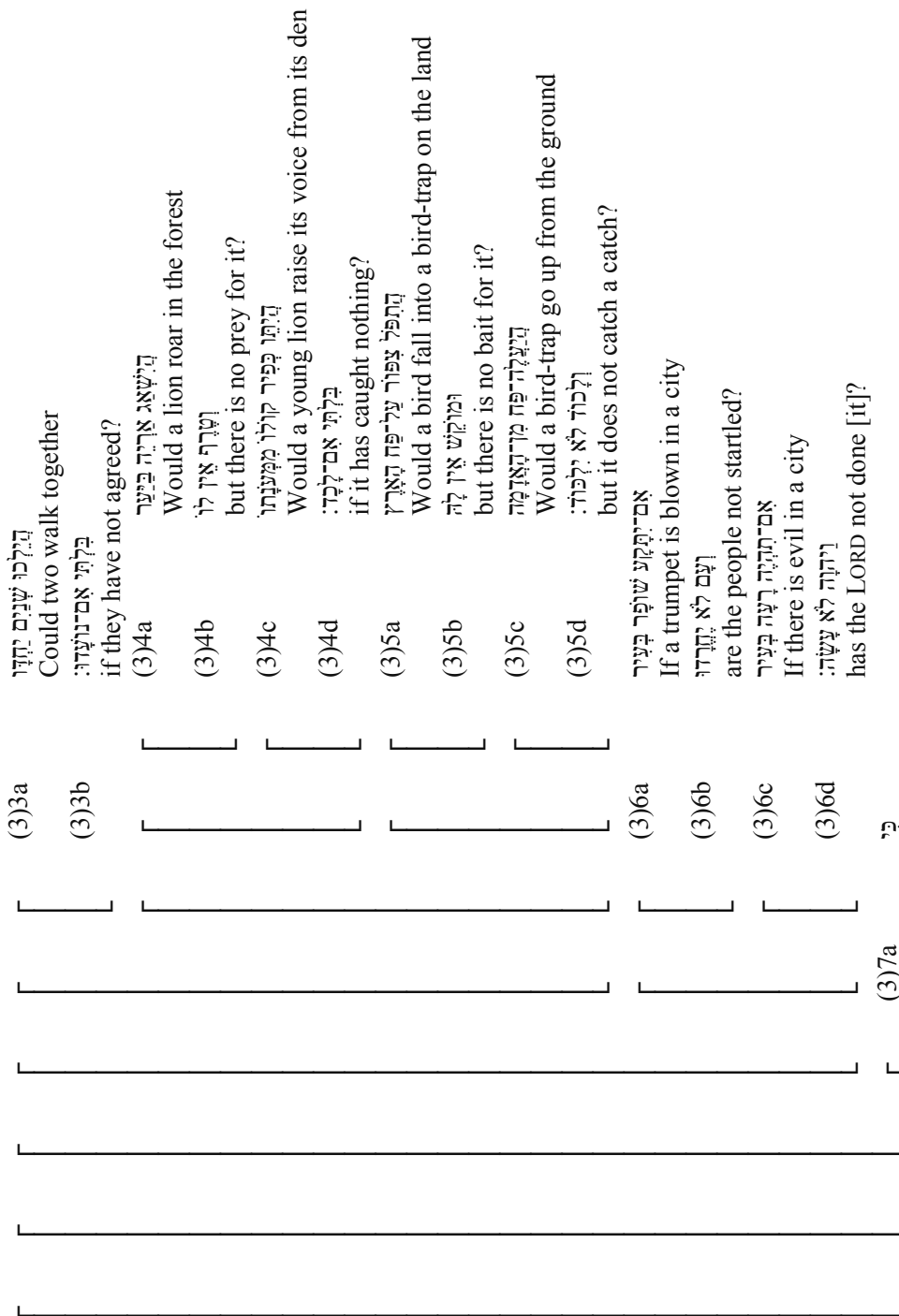
AMOS 3:3–15

HEAR AND TESTIFY

Chapter three opens with a series of rhetorical questions, containing vivid imageries of a roaring lion, a trapped bird, and a trumpet blast, suggesting alarm and creating an air of inevitability about what is to follow. This is reinforced by the second reference to the roaring lion, this time, the Lord, asking *who is not afraid*. (3:8b). There is no avoiding the call to prophesy; whoever is called is compelled to do so. Combined, they lead to the final question about prophesying and, in doing so, have the effect of strengthening its impact. *The Lord GOD has spoken, who will not prophesy?* (3:8c–d). In 3:9a–15d, where the Lord’s command to hear and testify (3:9a–b, 13a–b) is heard, the content of the prophecies is made clear. The air of alarm previously engendered, once again comes to the fore in the divine judgement in which the sons of Israel are left in no doubt that, because of their persistent violations, such as oppression and exploitation (3:10d), there is no escaping justice and destruction. The level of destruction is alluded to by the declaration that the altar and the houses will be struck down (3:14b–15c). The answers to the questions posed come easily, but the judgement handed down is extremely difficult to accept.

4.1 TEXT-SYNTAX: AMOS 3:3–15

4.1.1 Diagram



	(3)7b	[	Indeedy לא יַעֲשֶׂה אֱדוּי יְהוָה דְּבָר the Lord GOD does not make a word
	(3)7c	[	כִּי אִם-גֵּלָה סודוֹ אֶל-עַבְדָּיו תִּנְבְּאִים: if he has not revealed his confidential conversation to his servants, the prophets.
	(3)8a	[	אַרְיֵה שָׁאָג A lion has roared
	(3)8b	[	מִי לֹא יִירָא who will not fear?
	(3)8c	[	אֱדוּי יְהוָה דְּבָר The Lord GOD has spoken
	(3)8d	[	מִי לֹא יִנְבֵּא: who will not prophesy?
	(3)9a	[	הַשְׂמִיעוּ עַל-אֲמָנוֹת בְּאַשְׁדּוֹד וְעַל-אֲמָנוֹת בְּאַרְז מִצְרַיִם Make [it] heard on the palaces in Ashdod and on the palaces in the land of Egypt
	(3)9b	[	וְאָמְרוּ and say:
	(3)9c	[	הִתְקַפּוּ עַל-הַרֵי שָׁמָר gather on the mountains of Samaria
	(3)9d	[	וְרֹאוּ מְהוֹמוֹת רַבּוֹת בְּחוּכָה וְעִשְׂוֻקִים בְּקִרְבָּה: and see the great confusions in her midst and oppressions inside her.
	(3)10a	[	וְלֹא-יָדְעוּ They did not know
	(3)10b	[	עֲשׂוֹת-יִבְכְּהָ how to do what was right,
	(3)10c	[	נֹאֲמֵי-יְהוָה utterance of the LORD,
	(3)10d	[	הָאֳזִירִים הִקְמִס בְּאֲזָנוֹתֵיהֶם: they who are storing up violence and extortion in their palaces.
	(3)11a	[	לִכֹּן כֹּה אָמַר אֱדוּי יְהוָה

			Therefore, the Lord GOD said thus:
		(3)11b	צַר an enemy
		(3)11c	יִסְבִּיב הָאָרֶץ all around the country,
		(3)11d	וְהוֹרִיד מִמֶּנּוּ עֲצָדָה he will bring down from you your strength
		(3)11e	וְנִבְנוּ אֲרָמֹנֶיהֶם: and your palaces will be plundered.
	(3)12a	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה Thus said the LORD:	
		(3)12b	כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא הָרֶעָה מִפִּי הָאִרִי שֹׁטֵי קְרָעִים אוֹ כְדִל־אֵזֶן as a shepherd snatches from the mouth of the lion
		(3)12c	שְׁנֵי שָׁנִים אוֹ פֶּתֶק אוֹרֵן: two shanks or a piece of an ear,
		(3)12d	כִּי יִפְצְלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל so the sons of Israel will be delivered
			הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשִׁמְרוֹן בְּפֶתַח מִטָּה וּבְדָמָשְׁקִי עָרֵשׁ: who are sitting in Samaria in the splendour couch
			וּבְדָמָשְׁקִי עַל מִזְבְּחוֹת בֵּית־אֵל and in Damascus on that of a divan.
	(3)13a	שִׁמְעוּ Hear	
	(3)13b	וְהִעִידוּ בְּבֵית יַעֲקֹב and testify in the house of Jacob,	
	(3)13c	וְאָמַרְתִּי הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵי הַצִּבְאוֹת: utterance of the Lord, GOD, the God of hosts:	
	(3)14a	כִּי בַיּוֹם כִּי אֶבְרַח פִּשְׁעֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלִי for on the day of my visit of the transgressions of Israel upon him	
		(3)14b	וְכָתַתִּי עַל־מִזְבְּחוֹת בֵּית־אֵל I will visit the altars of Bethel.
		(3)14c	וְנִגְדְּעוּ קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ The horns of the altar will be cut off
		(3)14d	וְנָפְלוּ לָאָרֶץ: and they will fall to the ground.

4.1.2 Analysis

Amos 3:3–15 has the following divisions.

minor units		bigger units	major units
3:3a–b	3:3a–5d	3:3a–7c	3:3a–8d
3:4a–5d			
3:6a–d	3:6a–7c		
3:7a–c			
3:8a–d		3:8a–d	
3:9a–10d	3:9a–11e	3:9a–12d	3:9a–15d
3:11a–e			
3:12a–d			
3:13a–c		3:13a–15d	
3:14a–15d			

The first minor unit (3:3a–b), begins with the interrogative particle וְ and the verb in *yiqtol*-form (הֲלִכְנוּ). As the verb occurs at the beginning, it is in modal *yiqtol*-form. The two verbs הִלְכְּנוּ (*to walk*) and יִצְדְּנוּ (*to agree*) used in this verse are plural and their presence differentiates this rhetorical question from the following interrogative sentences, which begin with the same interrogative particle וְ. The second clause 3:3b starts with the negative particle בְּלֹתִי and is followed by the conditional particle אִם and the verb in *qatal*-form (נִוָּדְדִי).¹⁸⁶

The second minor unit (3:4a–5d), constructed in question form, is built around four consecutive occurrences of the interrogative particle וְ. Each question is in double form with the second part qualifying the first. The interrogative particle וְ, which in each is placed at the beginning, is combined with a verb, וְהִשְׁאֵג in 3:4a, וְהִתְוַ in 3:4c, וְהִתְפַּל in 3:5a and וְהִצְעִלָה in 3:5c. The second part of each sentence contains a negative particle, אֵין (3:4b, 5b), בְּלֹתִי (3:4d) and אֵלֵי (3:5d). Similar to unit 3:3a–b, the clauses in this unit begin with modal *yiqtol* verbal forms seen in 3:4a, 3:4c, 3:5a and 3:5c, with these verses providing foreground information. However, as 3:4b and 5b are nominal clauses lacking a verb, they neither look forward nor

¹⁸⁶ Muraoka observes that all of the rhetorical questions, despite their positive or negative tone, are of themselves emphatic. Moreover, the negative rhetorical questions are slightly more emphatic than the affirmative ones. See Takamitsu Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem: Magnes; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 118–19.

backward. The *qatal*-form (לָכַד) in 3:4d provides the background information. In 3:5d, the infinite absolute (וְלָכַד), is neither looking forward nor backward. All of these factors together result in a coherent unit. The syntactic category *number* should also be noted. Unit 3:4a–5d is singular while 3:3a–b is plural, distinguishing the one from the other. The singular verbs in 3:4 and 3:5 bind 3:4a–5d together as a single subunit.

The interrogative sentence pattern is continued in the third minor unit 3:6a–d. As in 3:4a–5d, the two questions in 3:6a–d are related. Even though the interrogative particle is changed from הֲ to אֵם, its position remains the same. The particle אֵם introduces a rhetorical question, which adds a new perspective to the question.¹⁸⁷ Attached to the particle are two modal *yiqtol* verbal forms, אֵם-יִתְקַע, אֵם-תִּהְיֶה in 3:6a and 3:6c respectively. The second of these verbs (תִּהְיֶה) is always used in a dynamic manner.¹⁸⁸ It suggests that something is about to happen. Thereby, the noun רָעָה (*evil*) which immediately follows, heralds a calamity. The discursive background *qatal*-form, עָשָׂה (*to make, to do*) occurs in 3:6d, as does the negative particle לֹא in 3:6b and 6d. Here also for the first time the Lord appears.

The pattern followed in unit 3:7a–c differs from those in the previous units in that the questions have been replaced by assertive statements. This is clear from the use of the particle כִּי at the beginning of the verse.¹⁸⁹ It recurs in 3:7c, being preceded in 3:7b by the particle לֹא and followed by the particle אֵם. These two negative particles together create the affirmative meaning,¹⁹⁰ inferring that as a result of the presence of the particle כִּי a firm conclusion is reached.

The interrogative pronoun מִי (*who*) asks the question in the fifth unit 3:8a–d. As 3:8a does not contain a conjunction it is an asyndetic sentence, while the negative particle לֹא, which follows מִי in 3:8b and 3:8d serves as a declarative negation. Out of the four verbs in the unit, two are in *qatal*-form (שָׁאָג and דָּבַר) with the remaining two in *yiqtol*-form (יִירָא and יִנָּבֵא). 3:8a–d is the only verse in which clauses occur in *qatal* verbal form.

¹⁸⁷ Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew*, 128.

¹⁸⁸ Michael A. Grisanti, *NIDOTTE* “היה,” 1:1022–26.

¹⁸⁹ Various functions of the particle כִּי are explained in Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew*, 158–64.

¹⁹⁰ Both of the particles לֹא and אֵם belong in the same grammatical category. לֹא is a commonly used negative particle, whereas אֵם is used widely as a demonstrative, interrogative, conditional as well as a negative particle. Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew*, 128.

The presence of the direct speech is a characteristic of the sixth minor unit 3:9a–10d.¹⁹¹ In addition, the switch from the interrogative to the imperative is notable. The two verbs in imperative form *הַשְׁמִיעוּ* (*make heard*) and *אָמְרוּ* (*say*), appearing at the beginning of 3:9a–b, function as a *verbum dicendi* introducing embedded direct speech. However, these are not of the same type as the imperative verbal forms *אָסְפוּ* (*gather*) and *וִרְאוּ* (*see*), which form embedded direct speech in 3:9c–d. Following this interruption, the direct speech continues in 3:10. The direct speech formula *נְאֻם יְהוָה* (*utterance of the LORD*) in 3:10c confirms this, even though the third person form as seen in 3:10a, 10b, 10c is not commonly used in direct speech.

In 3:9a reference is made to Ashdod and Egypt, with Samaria being mentioned in 3:9c. The preposition *עַל* is twice used in relation to these places. The participle verbal form *אֹצְרִים* (*store up*) occurring in 3:10d is also notable. In normal usage a participle can function either as a noun or as a verb. Since the objects *תְּמָס* (*violence*) and *שָׂד* (*extortion*) depend on the participle, it functions here as a verb, with the prepositional phrase *בְּאֶרְמוֹתֵיהֶם* (*in their palaces*) being dependent on this verb.

In the seventh minor unit (3:11a–e) the divine speech formula *לֵכֵן כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה* (*therefore the Lord GOD said thus*) introduces the direct speech. The *qatal*-form *אָמַר* functions as a *verbum dicendi*. The inclusion of the two adverb particles *לֵכֵן* and *כֹּה* is also important here. *לֵכֵן* serves to establish a connection with 3:10, and in doing so explains the reason for the consequences to be inflicted. *כֹּה* looks forward in anticipation of what is to come in the verses immediately following, where the words of the Lord are to be found. Clause 3:11b has no predicate and consists only of the noun in absolute form *צָר* (*an enemy*), with the conjunction *וְ* creating a new clause *וּסְבִיב הָאָרֶץ* (*and that around the country*, 3:11c). Clause 3:11b thus functions as a *casus pendens*,¹⁹² an element which stands alone at the beginning. Here the third person singular present in *w^eqatal*-form *וְהוֹרִיד* (*he will bring down*, 3:11d),

¹⁹¹ For the general study on discourse analysis and how it is employed in the study of the Hebrew Bible particularly to comprehend the distinction between the syntax of direct and indirect speech, see Cynthia L. Miller, “Discourse Functions of Quotative Frames in Biblical Hebrew Narrative,” in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What It Is and What It Offers*, ed. Walter R. Bodine, SemeiaSt (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 155–82.

¹⁹² *Casus pendens* usually refers to a noun phrase which stands apart from a clause, but nevertheless occurs in a relative clause by means of a resumptive pronoun. See Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew*, 93–98.

refers to צַר, thus confirming it to be a *casus pendens*. The discursive background *w^eqatal* verbal forms (וְהוֹרִיד and וְנִבְּזוּ) provide background information, as the text looks forward. Interestingly, in 3:11d–e the three suffixes מִמֶּנָּה, מִמֶּנָּה, and מִמֶּנָּה though all being second person feminine singular, are used differently. The first is added to the prepositional particle מִן (*from*), the second to the masculine singular noun עֹז (*strength*), and the third to the masculine plural noun אֲרָמֹת (*palaces*).

The formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (*thus said the LORD*), containing the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר introduces the eighth minor unit (3:12a–d). This introduction is of significance as, with the absence of a first person speaker or an addressee from 3:12b–d, it confirms that these verses, which are in third person form, are in fact direct speech. The demonstrative adverb כֹּה in 3:12a and כֵּן in 3:12c show the connection to what is said in 3:12b. Normally, the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר connects a clause or phrase to a noun or pronoun, however, in 3:12b, it is coupled with a particle of comparison כִּי and thus כִּי אֲשֶׁר combined are used as a comparison. Here too, the participle רֹעֶה and the definite article הַ as הַ *relativum* being joined together (הַרֹעֶה), indicates that they relate to a subject rather than a verb and translates as shepherd, the one who shepherds. In 3:12d הַיֹּשְׁבִים (*who are sitting*) is another example of this construct. Here again the definite article הַ is also הַ *relativum* this time with the participle functioning as a verb. Dependent on this verb is the prepositional phrase (בְּשִׁמְרוֹן בְּפֶאֶת מִטָּה) that immediately follows.

3:13a–c contains further direct speech, in this case, without any introductory formula. Here, however, it is delivered in the second person plural, and is not a continuation of the previous verses. 3:13a, שִׁמְעוּ (*hear*), an asyndetic clause, and וְהִעֲדִידוּ (*testify*) in 3:13b, both of which are in the imperative masculine plural form, place the verse in the discursive foreground. The elaborate concluding speech formula נֹאמַר אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְבָּאוֹת (*utterance of the Lord, GOD, the God of hosts*), denoting the direct speech, is in contrast to the more simple נֹאמַר יְהוָה (*utterance of the LORD*) in 3:10c and 3:15d.

Direct speech continues in 3:14a–15d, once again, without an introductory formula, but is, however, marked at the beginning by the particle כִּי, with the verbless clause 3:15d functioning as a concluding formula. As 3:14a (כִּי בַיּוֹם פָּקְדִי פֶשַׁעֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָיו) is a prepositional phrase and has no verb form, it does not join with 3:14b (וּפְקֹדֹתַי עַל־מִזְבְּחוֹת בֵּית־אֵל), as would

normally be the case. The presence of the conjunction ׀ at the beginning of the verb וּפָקַדְתִּי results in the creation of two separate clauses. However, as the occurrences in both clauses are to happen at the same time, the former functions as a *casus pendens* for the latter. All the verbs are in *w^eqatal*-form looking forward while at the same time functioning as background for the whole unit. Furthermore, all of these verbs with the exception of וּפָקַדְתִּי, describe how the Lord intends to punish Israel. A number of elements connect clauses 3:14a, 14b and 15a. In each case the first person singular is used, with the preposition עַל also occurring in all three clauses. The presence of the *w^eqatal*-form in the first person singular (וְהִכֵּיתִי, וּפָקַדְתִּי) in 3:14b and 15a, is also a parallel linking both clauses.

The ten minor units, though independent of one another, are connected by way of various formulas or other elements. These together act as a chain, linking all parts of 3:3a–15d. Unit 3:3a–b, 4a–d, 5a–d and 6a–d deal with rhetorical questions. These questions link the units, in that, each time, two related sentences are concerned and each begins with an interrogative particle, either הֲ or אִם (3:3a, 4a, 4c, 5a, 5c, 6a, and 6c). Modal *yiqtol* verbal forms occur in the same clauses. Also, a feature of each question is the inclusion of a negative particle (3:3b, 4b, 4d, 5b, 5d, 6b and 6d).

Following on, is a statement in *qatal*-form (3:7a–c). Whereas, previously, rhetorical questions are merely posed, here the tone is emphatic, leaving little room for doubt. The adverbial particle כִּי (3:7a), connects this unit to the preceding one. Another connecting factor is the divine designation found in both units, יְהוָה (3:6d), and אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (3:7b). In addition, there is the presence of the negative particles לֹא in 3:7b and אִם in 3:7d.

Similarities between the units continue to be seen in unit 3:8a–d, characterized by the inclusion of the interrogative particles הֲ (3:3a, 4a, 5a, 5c), אִם (3:6a, 6c) and מִי (3:8b, 8d). At least one of the negative particles (לֹא, אִין, בְּלִיתִי) occurs in every verse from 3:3a–8d. The mention of the lion roaring in 3:8a is a reminder of the earlier references to the same (3:4a, 4c). Interestingly, the verb דָּבַר (*to speak*) and נָבֵא (*to prophesy*) were seen in noun form דְּבַר (*word*) and נְבִיאִים (*prophets*) in 3:7b–c.

While direct speech is common to both units 3:9a–10d and 3:11a–e, the speech formulas differ. The verbless formula נֹאם־יְהוָה (*utterance of the LORD*) is employed in the first, with the second being introduced by the formula יְהוָה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (*therefore the Lord GOD said*

thus), containing the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר. The adverbial particle לָכֵן demonstrates conclusively that the words spoken in 3:11b–e are a direct consequence of what was earlier said in 3:9a–10d. Also mention of אֲרָמֹנֹתֵיהֶם (*palaces*) is made in both units.

With 3:12a being an asyndetic clause, 3:12b–d is a new direct speech. However, there are a number of discernible connections between this unit and the preceding one. Firstly, the two introductory speech formulas are parallel. Secondly, both contain the adverb כֹּה, a *verbum dicendi* אָמַר and a divine naming יְהוָה and thirdly, the third person plural form is frequently used.

It is important to consider the syntactic *number* when dealing with the utterance of the Lord in units 3:13a–c and 3:14a–15d. In the former, the direct speech is marked by an addressee in the second person, whereas, in the latter, it is marked by a speaker in the first person, thus distinguishing the one from the other. However, the particle conjunction כִּי (*for*), in 3:14a is a linking factor.

Units 3:9a–12d and 3:13a–15d are direct speeches introduced or concluded by either the verbless formula (נֹאֲמֵי־יְהוָה), or a formula containing the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה). Even though they are interrupted by the asyndetic clause 3:13a, the units are linked as follows: (i) both open with imperative verbs in masculine plural form (וְאָמְרוּ, הִשְׁמִיעוּ and הָעִידוּ, שְׁמָעוּ), (ii) similar usage of conjunctions and particles, (iii) names of places (אֲשֶׁדּוֹד, וְנִבְזִי, וְהוֹרֵד מִמֶּנּוּ עֵזָדָה), and (iv) references to destruction (וְהָכַדְתִּי, וְהָבִיתִי, וְהָרַסְתִּי, וְהָבִיתִי, וְהָרַסְתִּי).

4.1.3 Summary

Here all of the elements previously examined are drawn together to demonstrate how the findings show the two major units, 3:3a–8d and 3:9a–15d, are interrelated and together constitute a single pericope 3:3a–15d.

➤ The first major unit (3:3a–8d)

The syntactic features are:

- A series of rhetorical questions is formed by a number of interrogative particles.
- The interrogative particles are immediately followed by a verb in the imperfect form.

- All of the nine rhetorical questions consist of two elements.
- The most frequently occurring verbs are in modal *yiqtol* and *qatal*-form.
- Negative particles occur throughout the unit.
- Some syntactic features within the rhetorical questions are interrelated. These are:

(i) 3:3a–b and 3:4c–d

3:3a || 3:4c: interrogative particle + imperfect verb

3:3a: ... הֲלֹכִי

3:4c: ... הֲיִתָּו

3:3b || 3:4d: same preposition – same conjunction – verb in *qatal*-form

3:3b: בְּלִתִּי אִם־נוֹעְדוּ

3:4d: בְּלִתִּי אִם־לָכַד

(ii) 3:4a–b and 3:5a–b

3:4a || 3:5a: same interrogative particle + imperfect verb – singular noun – noun with preposition

3:4a: הֲיִשָּׂאג אֶרֶץ בִּיעֵר

3:5a: הֲתִפֹּל צִפּוֹר עַל־פֶּחַ

3:4b || 3:5b: same conjunction – singular noun – same negation – preposition with suffix

3:4b: וְטָרַף אֵין לוֹ

3:5b: וּמִוִּקֵּשׁ אֵין לָהּ

(iii) 3:5c–d and 3:6a–b

3:5c || 3:6a: interrogative particle + imperfect verb – singular noun – noun with preposition

3:5c: הֲיִנְעֹלָה־פֶּחַ מִן־הָאֲדָמָה

3:6a: אִם־יִתְקַע שׁוֹפָר בְּעִיר

3:5d || 3:6b: same conjunction + noun – same particle negative – imperfect verb

3:5d: וְלֹכֹד לֹא יִלְכֹּד

3:6b: וְעַם לֹא יִתְּרִדוּ

(iv) 3:6c–d and 3:6a–b

3:6c || 3:6a: same interrogative particle – imperfect verb – singular noun – same preposition
+ same noun

3:6c: אֲמִי־תִהְיֶה רָעָה בְּעִיר

3:6a: אֲמִי־יִתְּקַע שׁוֹפָר בְּעִיר

3:6d || 3:6b: same conjunction + noun – same particle negative – verb

3:6d: וַיִּהְיוּ לֹא עֲשֵׂה

3:6b: וְעַם לֹא יִתְּרִדוּ

(v) 3:8a–b and 3:8c–d

3:8a || 3:8c: noun – perfect verb

3:8a: אָרְיָה שָׁאָג

3:8c: אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר

3:8b || 3:8d: same interrogative particle – same particle negative – imperfect verb

3:8b: מִי לֹא יִירָא

3:8d: מִי לֹא יִנָּבֵא

It is to be noted that the questions in each pair (a) to (e) above are syntactically alike.

➤ The second major unit (3:9a–15d)

The syntactic features of this unit are:

- Rhetorical questions are replaced by direct speeches announcing divine judgement.
- All of the direct speeches are marked by a divine speech formula, though the formula does vary.

- Each subunit contains a divine designation, יהוה (3:10c), אֲדֹנָיִי יְהוה (3:11a), יהוה (3:12a), הַצִּבְאוֹת, יְהוה אֱלֹהֵי הַצִּבְאוֹת (3:13c) and יהוה (3:15d). These divine designations appear in speech formulas emphasizing that the Lord is not only the source of the message but the speaker as well.
- The most frequently used verbal forms are imperatives and *w^eqatal* as opposed to the first major unit, where modal *yiqtol*-form feature more prominently.

Despite the differences in construction there are many elements connecting the two major units, these being: (i) the Lord is presented in third person singular form in both (3:7b, 7c, 8c, 10c, 11a, 12a, 13c, 15d), (ii) the words of the Lord are heard in 3:8c (first major unit), and throughout the second, (iii) 3:8 emphasizing the significance of the prophetic call, is followed by various proclamations, (iv) the rhetorical questions set the scene for the direct speeches, and (v) the reference to an unspecified city (3:6a), coming before the naming of many places in the second.

In short, the two major parts, though dissimilar syntactically in many respects, are not stand-alone units. On the contrary, to be complete, they depend on and complement each other.

4.2 TEXT-SEMANTICS: AMOS 3:3–15

4.2.1 Who Can Resist the Prophetic Call?

The first major unit (3:3a–8d), consists of the first five minor units. Unit 3:3a–b, the first in a series of rhetorical questions, containing as it does the unspecified שְׁנַיִם (*two*), opens up a number of possibilities. Could it be that שְׁנַיִם refers to people or animals? However, when used, the verb הָלַךְ (*to walk*), normally relates to humans,¹⁹³ thus proposing two options, either the Lord and the prophet or two people.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Eugene H. Merrill, “הלך,” *NIDOTTE* 1:1032–35.

¹⁹⁴ Constable, “Notes on Amos,” 28–29, who notes that it is most likely that the two in question are the Lord and Amos, as it was he who proclaimed the word of the Lord. However, the sons of Israel ignored the commands of the Lord. It is his belief that two people do not travel together unless they know each other.

Unit 3: 3:4a–5d contains the images of a roaring lion, a young lion cub and an ensnared bird, and features various parallels and connecting elements between the clauses.¹⁹⁵ These include:

- (i) Clauses 3:4a and 3:4c where the nouns אַרְיָה (*lion*) and כַּפִּיר (*young lion*) are used in conjunction with the related verbs שָׁאָג (*to roar*) and נָתַן קוֹל (*to raise voice*), and the nouns בֵּיעַר (*forest*) and מְקַעֲנָתוֹ (*den*).
- (ii) Every second clause refers to baiting or trapping – טָרֵף (*prey*, 3:4b), לָכַד (*to catch*, 3:4d), מוֹקֵשׁ (*a bait*, 3:5b) and לָכַד (*to catch*, 3:5d).
- (iii) Linking clauses 3:5a and 3:5c are the recurring noun פֶּה (*trap*), the nouns אֶרֶץ (*earth*) and אֲדָמָה (*ground*), and the verbs נָפַל (*to fall down*) and עָלָה (*to go up*).
- (iv) Clauses 3:5a–d are all interrelated, each referring to the one activity – the entrapment of a bird. Even though the trapper is invisible in the text, it is clear that there is a trap (3:5a–b) and that a bird is trapped (3:5c–d).
- (v) The images of a young lion in the den 3:4c and that of a bird caught in a trap (3:5a) are parallel with each of the images belonging to the animal world. One significant difference is that the lion has got an active role, while that of the bird is passive.

The roar of the lion is a warning sound, symbolically representing the anger of the Lord. A lion in the forest can stalk and pursue its prey. However, foolish or unsuspecting prey, which enters the den, can also fall foul of a young lion. The message is clear: if the warnings go unheeded, not only does danger lie ahead, but death is unavoidable.¹⁹⁶

In unit 3:6a–d, clauses 6a and 6c are parallel in a number of respects. Firstly, there is the repetition of the noun עִיר (*city*) and secondly the trumpet is blown (יִתְקַע שׁוֹפָר) because of the presence of evil (רָעָה). The sound of the trumpet is normally associated with some significant event, either positive or negative.¹⁹⁷ Two situations in which it is most frequently

¹⁹⁵ Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 387.

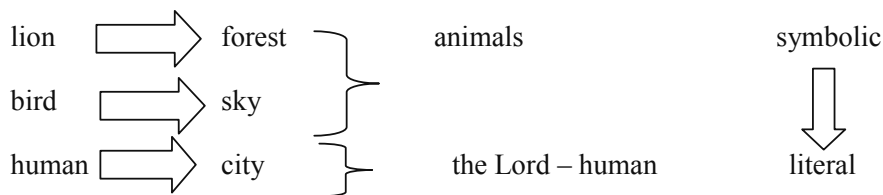
¹⁹⁶ Jeremias, *The Book of Amos*, 52, sees it not purely as a sign of danger but as an indication of the impossibility to escape from inevitable death.

¹⁹⁷ Francis Brown, *The New Brown – Driver – Briggs – Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, 1051.

heard are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁹⁸ (i) In military context to announce either the beginning of battle or the approach of an enemy,¹⁹⁹ to signal an attack,²⁰⁰ or for calling off an attack.²⁰¹ (ii) In the context of liturgical celebration in the temple it is used to herald either the jubilee year,²⁰² new moons,²⁰³ the bringing up of the ark of the Lord,²⁰⁴ or for proclaiming fasts and assemblies.²⁰⁵

Alarm, too, can occur in a positive or a negative situation. It can be brought about by a sense of awe of the Lord or, as is normally the case, a manifestation of fear. The latter scenario is the one in question here. The trumpet sound comes from the city rather than from the temple, indicating that what alarms the people is the evil all around them, and ultimately the fear of harm and even death. This evil, done by the Lord, is the terrible retribution exacted for their wrongdoing.

Whereas, unit 3:4a–5d speaks of the animal world and its habits, warning signs and the instinct for survival, unit 3:6a–d, set in the city, deals with human behaviour.²⁰⁶ Danger, fear and death are themes common to both, from the lion catching its prey to the bird being trapped and, finally, to the sound of the trumpet anticipating war and spreading fear among the people. This progression is shown below.



Differing from the previous minor units, unit 3:7a–c, puts the emphasis on the Lord, the word and the prophets. The Lord utters his word and reveals to the prophets his secrets, which carry clear and positive messages.²⁰⁷ As the call to prophesy is both noble and worthy, it cannot be resisted. These verses could also be revealing that the *two* (שְׁנַיִם) in

¹⁹⁸ For those references, see Robert H. O’Connell, “שֹׁפָר,” *NIDOTTE* 4:68–69.

¹⁹⁹ Neh 4:18, 20; Isa 18:3; Jer 4:5–6, 19, 21, 6:1, 17; Ezek 33:3–6; Hos 5:8, 8:1.

²⁰⁰ Josh 6:16, 20; Judg 7:18–20, 22; Job 39:24–25.

²⁰¹ 2 Sam 2:28, 18:16, 20:1, 22.

²⁰² Lev 25:9.

²⁰³ Ps 81:3.

²⁰⁴ 2 Sam 6:15; 1 Chr 15:28; Ps 47:5, 98:6; Josh 6:4.

²⁰⁵ Joel 2:15.

²⁰⁶ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 187 asks, in place of animals, will humans become the victims, with certain death?

²⁰⁷ John L. McLaughlin, “Is Amos (Still) among the Wise?” *JBL* 133 (2014): 293.

3:3a–b, are in fact, the Lord and the prophets. The action of the Lord in disclosing his secrets confirms the closeness of the relationship existing between them and that they are well known to each other.

In 3:6d, the object of עָשָׂה (*to make, to do*), though not mentioned specifically, appears to refer to the evil (רָעָה) in the city. Another possibility is that this clause may be a precursor to the message alluded to in 3:7b, with the Lord using evil as a tool to remind the people of their transgressions. That they seem to be unconcerned about the message, revealed to them by the prophets, shows a complete failure on their part to recognize that the evil all around them is a sign of the Lord's displeasure at their rejection of his word.

Unit 3:8a–d, incorporating a number of elements connecting it to the previous minor units, brings the first major unit to a conclusion. The connections are:

- (i) דָּבַר (*to speak*) in 3:8c and דְּבָר (word) in 3:7b.
- (ii) נְבִיא (*to prophesy*) in 3:8d and נְבִיאִים (*prophets*) in 3:7c.
- (iii) שָׁאָג (*to roar*) in 3:4a and 3:8a and אֶרְיָה (*lion*) in 3:4a and 3:8a.

Other comparatives are: (i) a sense of fear (3:8b) acting as a reminder of the fear gripping the city (3:6a–d). (ii) The closeness of the relationship between the Lord and the prophets, mentioned in both 3:7a–c and 3:8c–d and confirmed by the act of שָׁנִים, who must know each other, walking together. (iii) The words of the Lord run through a number of clauses – (a) the Lord does the evil (3:6d), (b) the Lord made a word (3:7b), (c) the Lord reveals his secret (3:7c) and (d) the Lord spoke (3:8c).

Here evil is just a sign, the word itself is much more powerful. The emphasis being put on the message of the Lord makes for a very strong ending to the unit.

4.2.2 Punishments Foretold

The second major unit (3:9a–15d), consists of five minor units. Unit 3:9a–10d resembles a judgement scene where the nature of the offences is revealed. The violence earlier associated with the animal kingdom is now reflected in unacceptable human behaviour.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 192, recognises the images changing from those of animals in the wild to humans in a built-up environment, and specifically a named city in 3:9.

Interestingly, however, no declaration of punishment is recorded here. The Lord asked that his word be heard from the palaces of Ashdod and Egypt, places which remind Israel of divine judgement and slavery.²⁰⁹ The palace strongholds are located on the boundaries with Ashdod and Egypt as protection against attack from these places. Destruction of the palaces will alternately lead to the fall of the nation.

They are told to gather on the mountains of Samaria (3:9c), geographically higher places which are good vantage points for observing what is happening below. From there the oppressions, violations and confusions can be clearly seen. As the places which are intended to provide protection from outside enemies are themselves now filled with violence and exploitation, it is reasonable to expect that the entire nation will be overthrown. Verse 10 contains a strong condemnation of this unacceptable situation, where the Lord states clearly and unambiguously that those engaged in evil against others are ignorant of proper conduct. This unit is a preface to 3:11–15, which concerns the judgement and punishment of the Lord.

In 3:11a–e, judgements are pronounced on Israel, with לָכֵן כֹּה (*therefore, thus*) confirming that they are handed down on account of the transgressions outlined in the previous unit. They are now under serious threat from a powerful enemy. Even the palaces, traditionally seen as symbols of strength, will not be able to provide refuge וְנִבְזוּ אֶרְמוֹתֶיךָ (*and your palaces will be plundered*). Through acts of oppression against its own people, Israel has weakened its defences against attack from an outside enemy, making it impossible to withstand invaders. Clauses 3:11d and 3:11e are parallel because of the presence of the nouns עֲזֶיךָ (*your strength*) and אֶרְמוֹתֶיךָ (*your palaces*), and also the verbs יֵרֵד (*to bring down*) and קִבְּצוּ (*to plunder*). Further, אֶרְמוֹתֶיךָ in 3:11e makes a connection with אֶרְמוֹת in 3:9a and 3:10d.

Initially, 3:12a–d, with the double use of נִצֵּל appears positive. However, it soon becomes clear that what is being rescued is insignificant.²¹⁰ Any hope of survival is well and truly dashed²¹¹ when the comparison with the shepherd managing to salvage but a piece of an ear

²⁰⁹ Amos 1:8, 2:10, 3:1.

²¹⁰ Robert L. Hubbard Jr., “נִצֵּל,” *NIDOTTE* 3:141–47.

²¹¹ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 198.

and two shanks is made.²¹² A healthy sheep might hear approaching danger or might be able to run to safety, but when the opportunity to escape is denied, the outlook is indeed bleak. Any thought that נָצַל (3:12b) promises deliverance is unfounded.²¹³ The way of life, with all its opulence and privileges, enjoyed by the sons of Israel, is coming to an end.²¹⁴ They and all their possessions face utter destruction, leaving fragments so tiny as to be non-existent.²¹⁵

Verse 13 begins the final part of the second major unit of the pericope. The terms שָׁמַעוּ (*hear*) and וְהָעִידוּ (*and testify*) in 3:13a–b are part of the one communication. Even though this unit continues on the themes of the previous ones, a significant difference emerges in that in the preceding verses the enemy is unknown, whereas here it is explicitly mentioned that the Lord himself will carry out the punishments.

Unit 3:14a–15d contains various parallels and other connecting elements. Parallels occurring are: (i) פָּקַד in 3:14a and 3:14b, (ii) מְזַבֵּחַ in 3:14b and 3:14c, and (iii) בֵּית in 3:15a, 3:15b and 3:15c. Other connections include: (i) חֶרֶף (*winter*) and קֵיץ (*summer*) in 3:15a, and (ii) גָּדַע (*to cut off*) in 3:14c, נָפַל (*to fall*) in 3:14d, נָכָה (*to smash*) in 3:15a, אָבַד (*to perish*) in 3:15b, and סָפָה (*to come to an end*) in 3:15c, all of which are used to denote destruction.

The unit also contains a striking number of references to constructions and to the fate that is about to befall them. The altars are erected to idols and the associated idolatrous practices will cease to exist, וְנִגְדְּעוּ קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ (*and the horns of the altar will be cut off*), 3:14c.²¹⁶ The winter houses and summer houses along with their expensive ivory decorations will be levelled to the ground, as will be the many fine houses (3:15a–c). The Lord warns that the

²¹² Dempster sees these two legs and a piece of an ear as evidence of annihilation. Stephen G. Dempster, “Amos 3: Apologia of a Prophet,” *La Revue Baptiste de Theologie* 5 (1995): 46.

²¹³ Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24A (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 373; Smith, *Amos*, 122; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 239; Blair J. Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel: Amos 3–6 Read as a Unity” (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 2012), 76; Viberg, “Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony,” 109.

²¹⁴ Mays et al., eds., *Harper’s Bible Commentary*, 722.

²¹⁵ Meindert Dijkstra, “The Ivory Beds and Houses of Samaria in Amos,” in *Image, Text, Exegesis: Iconographic Interpretation and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Izaak J. de Hulster and Joel M. LeMon, LHBOTS 588 (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 192–93.

²¹⁶ Exod 21:13–14; 1Kgs 1:50, 2:28–35. For a description of the significance of horns of the altar in the cultic usage, see Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 83.

days of rejecting his commands are over. No more will he tolerate their evil behaviour. Here, with the promise of total destruction, the divine judgement reaches its climax.²¹⁷

There are many elements linking the bigger units 3:9a–12d and 3:13a–15d.

- The verb *שָׁמְעוּ*, in imperative plural form, appears in both 3:9a and 3:13a. In the first instance, it is used as a command, whereas in the second it acts as an invitation.
- As previously outlined, the verbs *גָּדַע* (*to cut off*), *נָפַל* (*to fall*), *נָכָה* (*to smash*), *אָבַד* (*to perish*), and *סָפָה* (*to come to an end*) in 3:14c–15c, all pertain to destruction. This list can be extended to include *יָרַד* (*to bring down*) in 3:11d, and *בָּזַז* (*to plunder*) in 3:11e.
- References to wrongdoing can be found in several clauses. *עֲשׂוּקִים* (*oppressions*) in 3:9d, *הָמָס* (*violence*) and *וְשֹׁד* (*extortion*) in 3:10d tell of the types of violations perpetrated, while *פְּשָׁע* (*transgressions*) in 14a indicates why the punishments are inflicted.
- *הַיֹּשְׁבִּים בְּשִׁמְרוֹן בְּפָאֵת מִטָּה וּבְדִמְשֶׁק עָרֶשׁ* (*who are sitting in Samaria in the splendour couch and in Damascus on that of a divan*, 3:12d),²¹⁸ and *בְּתֵי הַשֵּׁן* (*houses of ivory*, 3:15b), are reminders of the lavish lifestyle enjoyed by the oppressors.
- *יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*Israel*) appears under a number of guises – sons of Israel in 3:12c, house of Jacob in 3:14b and Israel in 3:14c. However, these give rise to some difficulties. Firstly, the question of whether it is the state that is being referred to, and if so, where precisely. A number of factors point to it being the Northern Kingdom. Both Samaria in 3:9c and 3:12d and Bethel in 3:14b are situated there, while the house of Jacob is generally understood to allude to it. Secondly, there is a possibility that the references are to all of the people of God. Credence is given to this argument if the twelve tribes of Israel, the sons of Jacob, are taken into consideration. In such a scenario, the entire population of both Israel and Judah is being spoken about. However, given that Ashdod and Egypt are being called upon it is reasonable to conclude that the unit refers to the latter.

²¹⁷ Stephen G. Dempster, “The Lord Is His Name: A Study of the Distribution of the Names and Titles of God in the Book of Amos,” *RB* 98 (1991): 178.

²¹⁸ See the real issue in 3:12 in relation to the expression *וּבְדִמְשֶׁק עָרֶשׁ* in Lawrence Zalcman, “Laying dmšq ‘rś to Rest (Amos III 12),” *VT* 52 (2002): 557–59.

4.2.3 Summary

- Parallels in the first major unit, 3:3a–8d.
 - Verse 4: words associated with a hunter and its victim
 - 3:4a || 3:4c \Rightarrow lion and young lion, roaring and raising voice, forest and den
 - 3:4b || 3:4d \Rightarrow prey and catching
 - Verse 5: interrelating activities concerning a bird and a snare
 - 3:5a || 3:5c \Rightarrow a bird falls down to the earth when a trap goes up
 - 3:5b || 3:5d \Rightarrow a trap is placed to get a catch
 - 3:4 || 3:5, synonyms – animal and bird, prey and catch
 - Verse 6: the Lord – human relationship
 - 3:6a || 3:6c \Rightarrow a trumpet is blown announcing danger in the city
 - 3:6b || 3:6d \Rightarrow fear and anxiety caused by the evil done by the Lord
 - 3:3 || 3:6 the Lord and the prophet or two people
 - 3:4 || 3:5 || 3:6 disaster occurs in every verse
 - Verse 7: the Lord–prophet relationship
 - 3:3 || 3:7 \Rightarrow (יְהוָה וְנָבִיא), the Lord and the prophet
 - Verse 8: action and response
 - 3:8a || 3:8c \Rightarrow a lion roared (3:8a) and the Lord spoke (3:8c)
 - 3:8b || 3:8d \Rightarrow the people were afraid (3:8b) and the prophets prophesy (3:8d)
- Other parallels between 3:8 and other verses in this unit.
- 3:8a || 3:4a–5d \Rightarrow a roaring lion
 - 3:8b || 3:6a–d \Rightarrow fear
 - 3:8c || 3:7a–c \Rightarrow the Lord spoke
 - 3:8d || 3:7a–c \Rightarrow prophecy
 - 3:8a–d || 3:3a–b \Rightarrow the Lord and the prophet

➤ The language employed in the second major unit 3:9a–15d, can be categorized as follows.

- Semantic word field

(a) Communication: שָׁמַע (*make heard*, 3:9a), אָמַר (*say*, 3:9b, 11a), נֹאֵם (*utterance*, 3:10c), שָׁמַע (*hear*, 3:13a) and וְהִעֲדִידוּ (*testify*, 3:13b).

(b) Destruction: יָרַד (*to bring down*, 3:11d), בָּזַז (*to plunder*, 3:11e), גָּדַע (*to cut off*, 3:14c), נָפַל (*to fall*, 3:14d), נָכַה (*to smash*, 3:15a), אָבַד (*to perish*, 3:15b), and סָפָה (*to come to an end*, 3:15c).

(c) Constructions and furniture: אֲרָמֹנוֹת (*palaces*, 3:9a, 10d, 11e), מִשְׁכָּה (*couch*) and עֲרִישׁ (*divan*, 3:12d), מִזְבֵּחַ (*altar*, 3:14b–c), בֵּית־הַחֹרֶף (*house of winter*, 3:15a), בֵּית הַקֶּיִץ (*house of summer*, 3:15a), בָּתֵּי הַשֵּׁן (*houses of ivory*, 3:15b), and בָּתִּים רַבִּים (*many houses*, 3:15c).

- Topographical names

אַשְׁדּוֹד (*Ashdod*, 3:9a), מִצְרַיִם (*Egypt*, 3:9a), שָׁמָרֹן (*Samaria*, 3:9c, 9d, 12d), יִשְׂרָאֵל (*Israel*, 3:12c, 14a) and בֵּית־אֵל (*Bethel*, 3:14b).

- Word repetition

(a) אֲרָמֹנוֹת (*palaces*, 3:9a, 10d, 11e), (b) יְהוָה (*LORD*, 3:10c, 11a, 12a, 13c, 15d), אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (*Lord GOD*, 3:11a, 13c), (c) אָמַר (*say*, 3:9b, 11a, 12a), (d) נֹאֵם (*utterance*, 3:10c, 13c, 15d), (e) שָׁמַע (*hear*, 3:9a, 13a), (f) נָצַל (*to snatch*, 3:12b, 12c), (g) פָּקַד (*to inspect*, 3:14a–b), (h) מִזְבֵּחַ (*altar*, 3:14b–c), and (i) בֵּית (*house*, 3:15a, 15b, 15c).

- Word synonym

(a) מְהוּמָה (*confusion*, 3:9d), עֲשׂוּקִים (*oppressions*, 3:9d), חָמָס (*violence*, 3:10d), וְשָׂד (*extortion*, 3:10d).

(b) יָרַד (*to bring down*, 3:11d), בָּזַז (*to plunder*, 3:11e), גָּדַע (*to cut off*, 3:14c), נָפַל (*to fall*, 3:14d), נָכַה (*to smash*, 3:15a), אָבַד (*to perish*, 3:15b), סָפָה (*to come to an end*, 3:15c).

- All of the direct speeches, which span the entire unit, are marked at the beginning, at the end or in the middle by direct speech formulas. Running throughout is the theme of

divine judgement, giving the reasons for such judgement as well as the level of destruction to be meted out.

Finally, the following part demonstrates how both major units belong together.

(i) The word אֲרִיָּה (*lion*) in 3:4a, 4c, 8a and 12b establishes a link between the units. The image of the lion roaring after savaging its prey in the first is followed in the second by that of tiny fragments being all that can be salvaged after the attack. This is akin to what will remain of the sons of Israel after the Lord has served his justice (3:12b–c).

(ii) The image of the horns of the altars of Bethel being cut off and falling to the ground (3:14c–d) is reminiscent of that of the bird falling to earth in 3:5a.²¹⁹ Both the root word נפל and the noun אֶרֶץ occur in 3:5a and 3:14d. Once again, destruction is the central theme.

(iii) The metaphorical language of the rhetorical questions in the first major unit is a precursor to warnings, judgements and prescribed punishments outlined in the second.

(iv) Apart from the repeated references to the Lord or to the Lord God, there are other religious aspects to both units. In the liturgy and the temple-setting the blowing of a trumpet signifies something positive, with the horns of the altar being symbols of strength. However, references to שׁוֹפָר (*trumpet*) in 3:6a and קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ (*horns of the altar*) in 3:14c have negative connotations.²²⁰ The danger heralded by the sound of the trumpet and the bringing down of the strength symbolized by the cutting off of the horns of the altar is a clear indication of the displeasure and the power of the Lord. The fear generated by the realization of being surrounded by an enemy in 3:11b–c and the announcements in 3:14a–d and 3:15a–c reflect the alarm experienced by the people in 3:6a–d.

(v) Both units abound with expressions relating to the sound of the Lord's voice.

- The word (דָּבָר, 3:7b), revealing his secrets (סִדּוֹר, 3:7c), the Lord spoke (יְהוָה דִּבֶּר, 3:8c), prophesy (יִנְבֵּא, 3:8d).

²¹⁹ Tim Bulkeley, "Cohesion, Rhetorical Purpose and the Poetics of Coherence in Amos 3," *ABR* 47 (1999): 26.

²²⁰ As already noted, שׁוֹפָר was most often used in relation to war (Josh 6:4–5; Judg 3:27, 7:16, 20). It also had religious connotations. It was blown to mark the first day of the seventh month as a memorial and a day of acclamation (Lev 23:23–24; Num 29:1), and then on the tenth day it heralded the jubilee year (Lev 25:9). It was also heard when the ark of the Lord was being carried in procession (2 Sam 6:15; 1 Chr 15:28), as well as in the temple orchestra (Ps 150:3). Horns symbolising strength and honour are carved on the four corners of the altar (Exod 27:1–2).

- Make it heard (הַשְׁמִיעוּ, 3:9a, 13a), say (וְאָמְרוּ, 3:9b), testify (וְהָעִידוּ, 3:13b).
- Utterance of the Lord (וְאָמַר יְהוָה, 3:10c), thus said the Lord (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, 3:12a), utterance of the Lord, God, the God of hosts (וְאָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה הַצִּבְאוֹת, 3:13c).
- Other sounds heard are: (a) the roaring of a lion (אֶרֶץ שָׁאֵג, 3:4a, 8a), (b) the voice of a young lion (כִּפְיֵר קוֹלֹ, 3:4c), and (c) the sound of a trumpet (יִתְקַע שׁוֹפָר, 3:6a).

4.3 TEXT-PRAGMATICS: AMOS 3:3–15

4.3.1 A Series of Rhetorical Questions (3:3a–8d)

The first major unit (3:3a–8d) contains a series of rhetorical questions, which prepare the text-immanent reader for the two series of direct speech of the Lord in the second major unit (3:9a–15d). This section explores each minor unit through these questions, containing as they do many characters and imageries. 3:3a–b, the first unit, opens with a query *could two walk together if they have not agreed?* Depending on the answer, the outcome could be viewed as being either positive or negative as regards the identity of the two. If the answer is in the affirmative, this points to the two being the Lord and the people of Israel who had failed to understand him.²²¹ They do not realize that he is the one who does evil to the city, a point clarified in 3:6. On the contrary, if the answer is negative, then the suggestion is that the two already know each other, strongly implying that the two referred to are the Lord and the prophet. This proposition is supported by the statement that the Lord does nothing before revealing his secrets to the servants, the prophets. The text itself, however, lacks clarity as to their identities.

The images of the lion and its prey, the lion cub in the den, and the bird in the trap, in the second unit 3:4a–5d, metaphorically convey the idea of impending danger and ultimate disaster. Following this in 3:6a–d, the third unit, there is a change to the divine – human sphere, in which the Lord, the prophet and the people are dominant figures. That the Lord reveals his secrets to the prophets is confirmation of the close relationship existing between them (3:7). Further evidence of this closeness comes in 3:8, where it is stated that when the

²²¹ Two that walk together as the Lord and his people, see Yehoshua Gitay, “A Study of Amos’s Art of Speech: A Rhetorical Analysis of Amos 3:1–15,” *CBQ* 42 (1980): 295; Smith, *Amos*, 107; James R. Linville, “Amos among the ‘Dead Prophets Society’: Re-Reading the Lion’s Roar,” *JSOT* 90 (2000): 68–69; John Haralson Hayes, *Amos: The Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 124.

Lord speaks, the prophets' call to prophesy is irresistible.²²² The image of the roaring lion, instilling fear (3:4), recurs here, with a further mentioning in 3:12. The roar of the lion represents the divine voice of the Lord, something the prophets identify with and the message of which they feel compelled to proclaim.²²³ The rhetorical question, even though unanswered, very effectively prepares for the pronouncement of judgement which follows.²²⁴ It is clear, also, from these questions that the communication is between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader. The first major unit, by alluding to the message in the second, albeit indirectly, acts as a powerful introduction to the latter.

4.3.2 The Lord Addresses the Prophets (3:9a–10d)

Due to the absence of an introductory speech formula the identity of the addressee remains uncertain. However, the presence of the two imperative verbs in the second person plural, *הַשְׁמִיעוּ* (*make [it] heard*) and *וְאָמְרוּ* (*and say*), in 3:9a–b indicate that someone is being addressed. The 'you'-figures mentioned here relate to 3:7c where it is stated that the Lord reveals his secret to the prophets.²²⁵ The use of the plural form confirms this. The prophets are entrusted with the task of proclaiming the messages given to them. This proclamation comes in the form of an embedded direct speech in 3:9c–d. However, the question of who the addressees are, remains unanswered as yet more 'you'-figures in the imperative plural form, *הָאֲשָׁדּוֹדִי* and *וְרָאִי*, appear. The prophets are instructed to make it heard from the palaces of Ashdod and Egypt, making it more likely that it is the entire Kingdom that is being addressed. This is supported by the phrase *שְׁמֹרֹן הָרִי עַל-הָאֲרָצוֹת* (*gather on the mountains of Samaria*), suggesting a viewing point from which the whole of Israel could be observed. The command to assemble and see the confusion and oppression is given in an embedded direct

²²² Knud Jeppesen, "The Lord God Has Spoken, and Who Will Not Prophesy?": From Osee to Jonas in the Septuagint," in *Biblical and Near Eastern Essays: Studies in Honour of Kevin J. Cathcart*, ed. Carmel McCarthy and John F. Healey, JSOTSup 375 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 115; Sara J. Milstein, "Who Would Not Write?" The Prophet as Yhwh's Prey in Amos 3:3–8," *CBQ* 75 (2013): 434, shows that the prophet, when summoned by the Lord, is duty-bound to proclaim the word.

²²³ Thus, James R. Linville, "Visions and Voices: Amos 7–9," *Bib* 80 (1999): 25, exposes a trap set by means of a series of rhetorical queries which, though they can be easily answered, together act as a precursor to the affirmation that the prophet cannot ignore the call to prophesy, 3:8. See also Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 179, 192.

²²⁴ Yehoshua, "A Study of Amos's Art of Speech," 302.

²²⁵ See David E. Bokovoy, "שְׁמֹרֹן וְדִיעָהּ בְּבֵית יַעֲקֹב: Invoking the Council as Witnesses in Amos 3:13," *JBL* 127 (2008): 51.

speech, inferring that these are the words of the prophet. That these are revealed words is confirmed by the use of the direct speech marker, נֹאמַר־יְהוָה in 3:10c.

4.3.3 The Lord Communicates with Israel (3:11a–e)

The second direct speech in 3:11a–e is introduced with the divine speech formula לֵכֵן כֹּה אָמַר (therefore the Lord GOD said thus), marking the verses spoken by the Lord. Once again, however, the identity of the addressee is a matter of conjecture. Nevertheless, in 3:11d, a second person ‘you’-figure in singular form is mentioned, and this along with וְנִבְזְזוּ אֶרְמוֹנוֹתֶיךָ (and your palaces will be plundered) is a strong indication that the entire Kingdom of Israel, both North and South will be besieged.

The verb אָמַר (to say), as used in לֵכֵן כֹּה אָמַר אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה (therefore the Lord GOD said thus), places the direct speech in the past. This could cause some confusion over the order of the unit. As the previous unit is not marked by an introduction it could be interpreted as occurring in the now-moment, thus reversing the order. However, with the presence of לֵכֵן (therefore) at the beginning of 3:11, this interpretation is problematic. In Hebrew לֵכֵן refers to conclusions or consequences of previous happenings. The only logical conclusion, therefore, is that the present order is correct.

4.3.4 The Lord Speaks of the Sons of Israel (3:12a–d)

The direct speech formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (thus said the LORD), containing the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר, in the past tense, introduces the direct speech in the third unit 3:12a–d. Even though the speaker is known to be the Lord, it is unclear whom he is addressing. To determine this, it is necessary to examine the direct speech for clues. Unlike the previous two units, where the direct speech is marked by the presence of a second person form, this unit has neither a first nor a second person as the addressee. This opens up two possibilities.

(i) The addressee could be the prophets. A number of factors would support this argument. In 3:9 and 10 the Lord speaks to the prophets about the failings of the people and of their unacceptable behaviour. 3:12, then, could be seen as the Lord conveying to them the level of devastation that will be brought down upon the sons of Israel. Also, 3:9a–b and 3:13a–b are parallel, in that in both the prophets are addressed in the second person masculine plural form. However, as this form does not occur in 3:12, this possibility can be ruled out.

(ii) The second possible explanation is that the addressee is the text-immanent reader. Even if the direct speech is in the past, here it could relate to the text-immanent reader, who assumes an important position in the text.

4.3.5 The Lord Addresses the Prophets (3:13a–15d)

The analysis of the second part of the second major unit seeks to determine who is speaking and to whom. As already discussed, 3:9a–b and 3:13a–b are parallel syntactically, semantically, and now, as will be shown, communicatively as well. The second person masculine plural in 3:13a–b suggests that the direct speech is being directed at the prophets. נְאֻם־יְהוָה (utterance of the Lord, GOD, the God of hosts) in 3:13c and נְאֻם־יְהוָה (utterance of the LORD) in 3:15d indicate that the entire direct speech is of the Lord. However, because neither refers to a particular moment in time, the supposition is that it is taking place in the now-moment. In addition, the verb אָמַר, found in 3:11 and 3:12, is absent in 3:13–15, thereby allowing for the possibility that it also could be addressing the text-immanent reader. As there is nothing suggesting a change to the past for the text-immanent reader, this direct speech is still open to what the prophets have to say. Therefore, 3:13a–15d can be seen as a concrete representation of the first series of direct speech in 3:9a–12d.

In 3:13a–b the Lord instructs the prophets to hear (שָׁמַע) and to testify (עֵד) against the house of Jacob (בֵּית יַעֲקֹב). The house of Jacob is the addressee of the action of the prophet, not of the direct speech, and alludes to the entire people of Israel, whereas, previously, in 3:12c–d, the prophet had warned of the consequences for the people of the Northern Kingdom only. In 3:14 the Lord says that he will punish the people, but does not reveal when.

4.3.6 Summary

The table below presents an overview of the communicative elements in 3:3a–15d.

unit	text-immanent author	addressee	time of speaking	method of communication
3:3a–8d	-----	no specific addressee (text-immanent reader in focus)	-----	rhetorical questions
3:9a–10d	the Lord	‘you’-figure (prophet)	now- moment	direct speech
3:11b–e	the Lord	‘you’-figure (Israel)	past perspective	direct speech
3:12b–d	the Lord	no one is addressed directly (either the prophet or the text-immanent reader)	past perspective	direct speech
3:13a–15d	the Lord	‘you’-figure (either the prophet or the text-immanent reader)	now- moment	direct speech

Through a series of rhetorical questions in 3:3a–8d, the text-immanent author deals with the issue of prophecy. When invited to reply to the final question, *the Lord GOD has spoken, who will not prophesy?* the addressee is given no other option but to respond affirmatively. Prophecy is thereby marked by the Lord’s words which, in 3:9a–10d and 3:13a–15d, he reveals to the prophet in a more intimate manner. Even though the prophet said yes to the Lord’s call and proclaimed his words, the people of Israel, chose to ignore it. Consequently, they will soon be punished by the Lord. Despite this, having agreed to walk together with their mutual understanding, the Lord–prophet relation remains strong throughout.

4.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This section intends to investigate the role of the Lord as it is presented in 3:3a–15d. The following questions must be considered: (i) where can the Lord be located? (ii) how is he addressed? and (iii) what divine speech formulas are used and what functions do they have?

The following table lists the divine names and the speech formulas.

divine names	יְהוָה (3:6, 10, 12, 15) אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (3:7, 8, 11) אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצִּבְאוֹת (3:13)
divine speech formula	נֹאמַם-יְהוָה (3:10, 15) לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (3:11) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (3:12) נֹאמַם-אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצִּבְאוֹת (3:13)

From 3:3 to 3:6 non-human imageries are employed to convey an air of trepidation. This sense of danger is initially brought about by the allusions of a roaring lion, a bird falling into a snare and the setting of a trap. In 3:6 the focus moves from the animal kingdom to the divine – human world, with the sound of a trumpet heralding approaching danger and causing alarm and, in the process, creating the image of a city filled with evil. Though, gripped with fear, the inhabitants are unaware that it is the Lord who has caused this misfortune to be brought down upon them. However, the rhetorical question, אִם-תִּהְיֶה רָעָה, *if there is evil in a city has the LORD not done [it]?*, which announces the first appearance of the Lord in the text, and which contains the verb עָשָׂה in the perfect tense, confirms his involvement. This is further affirmed by the emphatic statement, כִּי לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה אֲדֹנָי (3:7). Here *word* replaces *evil* as the object of the Lord's actions, giving rise to the question of whether they are interchangeable. It is reasonable to ask this as it is important that the people understand the reasons behind the doing of evil. The contrast between the engagement of the Lord with the people (3:6), and with the prophets (3:7), is also noteworthy. In the first case there was a failure on the part of the people to realise that the evil came from the Lord, whereas in the latter case the prophets were fully cognisant of the fact that it is the Lord who reveals the secrets to them. Here, the

divine name occurs for the second time, in this instance, however, as אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, giving it a greater prominence.

The third appearance of the Lord occurs in 3:8, again under the divine name as already seen in 3:7. Comparing the voice of the Lord to the roar of a lion gives the people and the prophet a clear understanding of not only the importance of, but also the severe nature of the divine judgement. The comparison shows that, just as the roaring lion spreads fear among the people, so the prophet must prophesy when the Lord speaks. There will be no escape for the people and likewise prophesying will not be optional. Significantly, the actions of the Lord alone are recorded in the perfect tense. These actions עָשָׂה (3:6, 7), גָּלָה (3:7), דָּבַר (3:8) reflect he is prominent.²²⁶ It is important to note that the דָּבַר comes later in the form of judgement in the second part 3:9–15.

Observations so far made on the role of the Lord are shown below:

passage	action of the Lord	response
יְהוָה (3:6)	he does evil to a city	the people did not realize this
אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (3:7)	before doing anything, he reveals his secrets to the prophets	prophets realize this
אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (3:8)	he has spoken	prophets must obey

In the second major unit (3:9–15) the Lord appears predominantly in third person form in the divine speech formulas, which either introduce or close the direct speech, the exception being the speech formula in 3:10c. Elsewhere, in 3:14 and 15, the Lord can be seen in first person form, suggesting a change in his role from that of accuser to one of the dispensers of justice. The repeated use of these formulas highlights the significance of the word of the Lord, the word in this section being the judgement.

The Lord first appears in אָמַר יְהוָה (*utterance of the LORD*), 3:10c. The direct speeches which come immediately before and after, give the reason behind the judgement, which are, confusions and oppressions as well as ignorance of correct conduct. Even though the tone is judgemental, there is no warning of punishment.

²²⁶ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 191 notes that neither the prophet nor the people display any particular characteristics. However, a definite portrayal of the Lord begins to emerge in these verses, one in which he is seen to be wholly supreme and resolute.

יְהוָה לֵכֵן כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (*therefore the Lord GOD said thus*) in 3:11a precedes the direct speech in which specific judgements are announced. It should be noted that the name of the Lord changes from יְהוָה to אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, thus adding greater significance to the utterance. The Lord announces that an enemy will bring down their strength and destroy their palaces, the enemy here functioning as an instrument of the Lord.

The announcement of the annihilation of the sons of Israel themselves, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (*thus said the LORD*) in 3:12a, the third divine speech formula, is much harsher than what has gone before. It emphasises the level of the wrath of the Lord, in the image of the shepherd managing to rescue, but two shanks or a piece of an ear from the lion's mouth. The inference here is that rescue for Israel will be impossible. While it portrays the majesty and power of the Lord, and perfectly conveys his fury, it also indicates that, regardless of the severity of the punishment, the prophet must fulfil his obligation to deliver the message.

The extended divine name אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצִּבְאוֹת (*the Lord GOD, the God of hosts*), under which the Lord appears in 3:13c, and which is not found in any of the previous verses, is of special interest.²²⁷ The question arises as to the purpose of this elaborate naming and what it indicates. By including it in the speech formula, נֹאמַם־אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצִּבְאוֹת, the text-immanent author emphasises the now-moment. The position of the formula reveals certain interesting features. It is preceded by the two imperative verbs in asyndetic form, שָׁמְעוּ וְהָעִידוּ (*hear and testify*), which refer to a new direct speech. They also signal a warning, with the formula itself marking this solemn warning as an utterance of the Lord. This form of naming is not accidental, but has the express purpose of adding emphasis to this warning and greater prominence to the punishment. The name also conveys the degree of the authority, glory and power of the Lord,²²⁸ who himself both announces and delivers the punishments (3:14a–15c).

The fifth and the final appearance of the Lord is in 3:15d, in נֹאמַם־יְהוָה (*utterance of the LORD*), a speech formula identical with that in 3:10c. However, here the formula concludes the execution of the divine judgement,²²⁹ and comes immediately following the utterances of

²²⁷ In this context see Dempster, “The Lord Is His Name,” 170–89. Some attention is paid to the array of divine names in Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 79–82.

²²⁸ Smith, *Amos*, 124.

²²⁹ For the same conclusion, see Dempster, “The Lord Is His Name,” 178; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 79–80, 220.

the proposed punishments,²³⁰ where the level of destruction will be unprecedented. The Lord will vent his anger by cutting off the horns of the altar, demolishing winter houses and summer houses, as well as the houses of ivory. He will bring their luxurious way of life to an end and cause unimaginable devastation.

Based on the above arguments, it can be concluded that the role of the Lord and his message is of great significance. That the Lord reveals his word to the prophet, who, in turn, conveys it to the people, attests the intimate nature of the relationship between the two. Also made clear is the fact that the prophet is diligently carrying out his responsibility to prophesy. Now the onus is on the people of the Lord and the text-immanent reader to respond to the divine word.

²³⁰ Amos 3:14a (בְּיוֹם פִּקְדֵי פִשְׁעֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָיו) echoes Exod 32:34 (וּבְיוֹם פִּקְדֹתַי אֲעַלֵּהם חֲטָאתָם). See Martin Lang, *Gott und Gewalt in der Amosschrift*, FB 102 (Würzburg: Echter, 2004), 75.

CHAPTER FIVE

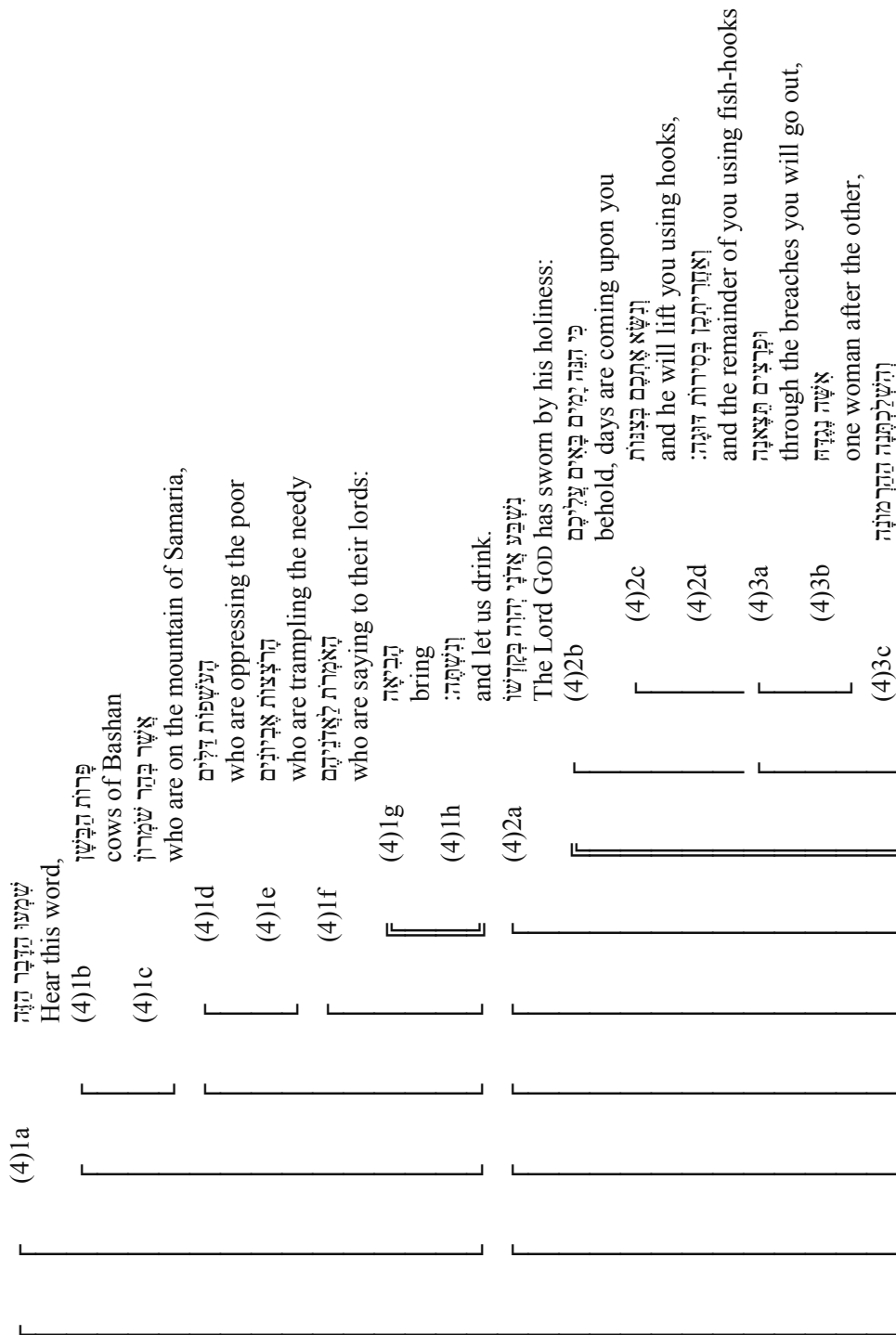
AMOS 4:1–13

BE PREPARED TO MEET YOUR GOD

Chapter four begins with a prophetic call to be heard, by scornfully addressing the cows of Bashan. They are spoken of with contempt for the luxurious lifestyle they have enjoyed at the expense of the poor and needy, whom they have shamefully exploited and taken advantage of (4:1c–h). The resulting punishment is imminent: *behold, days are coming upon you*, swears the Lord (4:2a–b). The Lord expresses his disappointment at the stubbornness of the people of Israel, despite the punishments inflicted on them. One misfortune after another was sent down – famine, drought, blight, mildew, locusts, and pestilence, – but yet they refused to mend their ways and respond positively, *yet you did not return to me* (4:6a–11f). Now Israel must be prepared to meet the Lord, the inherent tenor of the message being that it must take this warning seriously. The prophet effectively attests the power of the Lord by referring to his ability to form mountains, to create the wind and to turn the dawn to darkness. The analysis of the text under the headings text-syntax, text-semantics and text-pragmatics, intends to explore the reasons for Israel’s rejection of the Lord and his repeated effort to draw it back to himself.

5.1 TEXT-SYNTAX: AMOS 4:1–13

5.1.1 Diagram



L	and you will be thrown out toward Harmon,			נָאֻם יְהוָה: utterance of the LORD.		
(4)3d						
L						
(4)3d						
L						
(4)3d						
L						
(4)3d						
L						
(4)3d						
L						
(4)3d						
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(4)3d						
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(4)3d						
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(4)3d						
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(4)3d						
L						
(4)3d						
L						
(4)3d						

(4)6c	וְלֹא־שִׁבְתֶּם עָדִי Yet you did not return to me,	וְלֹא־שִׁבְתֶּם עָדִי Yet you did not return to me,
(4)6d	נְאֻם־יְהוָה: utterance of the LORD.	נְאֻם־יְהוָה: utterance of the LORD.
	(4)7a	וְגַם אֲנֹכִי מִנְעֵתִי מִכֶּם אֶת־הַגֶּשֶׁם בְּעוֹד שְׁלֵשָׁה חֳדָשִׁים לְקַצֵּר I, however, withheld the rain from you, only three months before the harvest.
	(4)7b	וְהִמְתַּתִּי עַל־עִיר אֶתֶּר I caused rain to fall in one city
	(4)7c	וְעַל־עִיר אֶתֶּר לֹא אֶמְתִּיר and caused no rain to fall in another;
	(4)7d	חֲלָקָה אֶתֶּר תִּמְטֹר one field was rained on
	(4)7e	וְחֲלָקָה אֶתֶּר [but the other field (4)7f
	(4)7f	אֲשֶׁר־לֹא־תִמְטֹר עָלֶיהָ which was not rained on
	(4)7g	תִּיבֹשׁ: תִּיבֹשׁ: dried up;
	(4)8a	וְנָעוּ שְׁתֵּי־עָרִים עַל־עִיר אֶתֶּר אֶתֶּר two, three cities went tottering to one city
	(4)8b	לְשָׁתוֹת מַיִם to drink water
	(4)8c	וְלֹא יִשְׁכָּעוּ but they went unsatisfied.
(4)8d	וְלֹא־שִׁבְתֶּם עָדִי Yet you did not return to me,	וְלֹא־שִׁבְתֶּם עָדִי Yet you did not return to me,

(4)8e	⌈	⌋	נְאֻם־יְהוָה: utterance of the LORD.
	⌈	⌋	(4)9a I struck you with scorching and mildew at the increasing of your gardens and your vineyards;
	⌈	⌋	(4)9b וְהִתְאַיֵּיכֶם וְיִתְחַכֶּם יֵאָכֵל הַגִּזְמוֹ and your fig trees and your olive trees the locust ate.
(4)9c	⌈	⌋	וְלֹא־שֹׁבְרֵי עֲדָי Yet you did not return to me,
(4)9d	⌈	⌋	נְאֻם־יְהוָה: utterance of the LORD.
	⌈	⌋	(4)10a שְׁלַחְתָּ בְּכֶם דָּבָר בְּדֶרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם I sent plague on you like that of Egypt,
	⌈	⌋	(4)10b הִרְגָתִי בַחֲרֹב בְּחֹרְרֵיכֶם עִם שְׂכֵי סוּסֵיכֶם I killed your young men with the sword along with your seized horses
(4)10c	⌈	⌋	וְנִשְׁעָה בָאֵשׁ וּבְאַחֲזֵכֶם מִתְנַיִיכֶם whereupon I made rise the stench from your army camps even into your nostrils.
(4)10d	⌈	⌋	וְלֹא־שֹׁבְרֵי עֲדָי Yet you did not return to me,
(4)10e	⌈	⌋	נְאֻם־יְהוָה: utterance of the LORD.
(4)11a	⌈	⌋	הִפַּכְתִּי בְכֶם I overturned you
(4)11b	⌈	⌋	כַּמְהֻפָּכֶת אֱלֹהִים אֲחִידֹם וְאֶת־עֲמֻנָהּ as God overturned Sodom and Gomorrah;
(4)11c	⌈	⌋	וְהָיִיתִי כְאֵהָר whereupon you became like a firebrand
(4)11d	⌈	⌋	מִצֵּל מִשְׁרָפָה taken away from the blaze.
(4)11e	⌈	⌋	וְלֹא־שֹׁבְרֵי עֲדָי

[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)11f	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)12a	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)12b	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)12c	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)12d	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)12e	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)12f	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)13a	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)13b	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)13c	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)13d	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)13e	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(4)13f	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]			

5.1.2 Analysis

Amos 4:1–13 has the following divisions.

minor units	bigger units	major units
4:1a–h	—————	4:1a–h
4:2a–3d 4:4a–5f	4:2a–5f	4:2a–13g
4:6a–d 4:7a–8e 4:9a–d 4:10a–e 4:11a–f	4:6a–11f	
4:12a–c	—————	
4:12d–13g	—————	

The first minor unit, 4:1a–h, begins with the imperative שִׁמְעוּ (*hear*). This verbal clause is followed by the vocative פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן (*cows of Bashan*, 4:1b). שִׁמְעוּ in masculine plural form, and פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן in feminine plural form represent a grammatical incongruity between the verb and the subject.²³¹ The relative particle אֲשֶׁר (*who*, 4:1c) connects the vocative clause to the nominal clause which follows. It is interesting to note the triple occurrence of the participle form, functioning as verbs, and which are immediately followed by the nouns דָּלִים (*poor*), אֲכִיזִינִים (*needy*) and אֲדֹנֵיהֶם (*their lords*), the objects in 4:1d, 1e and 1f respectively. Additionally, each participle is preceded by the הַ *relativum*, which functions in a similar manner to the relative particle אֲשֶׁר in 4:1c, linking the participle to the vocative.

²³¹ Numerous explanations have been given for this linguistic phenomenon of alternating masculine and feminine forms. For grammatical explanations, see Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew: Volume II*, trans. T. Muraoka, SubBi 14/II (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991), 552 (§150a). Most of the Amos exegetes also address the gender incongruity in Amos 4. For various interpretations, see Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 88; Jan Alberto Soggin, *The Prophet Amos: A Commentary and Translation*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1987), 67; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 419–21; Smith, *Amos*, 127; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 251–54. The article “Feminized Men in Amos 4:1–3” by van Wieringen discusses this syntactic matter and summarises various scholarly interpretations. See Archibald van Wieringen, “Feminized Men in Amos 4:1–3,” in *The Books of the Twelve Prophets: Minor Prophets, Major Theologies*, ed. Heinz-Josef Fabry, BETL 295 (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 403–409. Emmanuel O. Nwaoru, “A Fresh Look at Amos 4:1–3 and Its Imagery,” *VT* 59 (2009): 464–65.

Consequently, the tale of the contemptible behaviour of פְּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן continues through 4:1d–f. The short direct speech in 4:1g–h is introduced by the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר in 4:1f, and contains the imperative (שְׁמְעוּ) and the verb in *modal yiqtol*-form (וְנִשְׁתָּה) which are cohortative in meaning. The two are connected by the particle conjunction וְ, occurring at the beginning of the latter.

Unit 4:2a–3d, which is in the form of direct speech, is introduced by a formula containing the *verbum dicendi* שָׁבַע (to swear), and concludes with the divine speech formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה (utterance of the LORD). Opening the direct speech are the emphatic discourse particles כִּי (yes) and הִנֵּה (behold) in 4:2b, which anticipate an imminent action, going on to describe what is about to happen.²³² Hence, the communication, which is future-oriented is constructed around various verbal forms, these being, the participle בָּאִים (coming, 4:2b), the *w^eqatal*-form וְנִשָּׂא (and he will lift, 4:2c), וְהִשְׁלַכְתֶּנָּה (you will be thrown out, 4:3c), and the *yiqtol*-form תֵּצְאֶנָּה (you will go out, 4:3a). Though the direct speech is arranged in a discursive background framework, verbally it looks forward. The alternating use of the masculine and feminine suffixes, עֲלֵיכֶם (4:2b), אֲתֶכֶם (4:2c), וְאֶתְרִיתֶכֶן (4:2d) and נִגְדָה (4:3b) is open to interpretation.

The direct speech contained in 4:4a–5f, though not having any introductory formula, is marked with the concluding divine formula וְנֹאם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה in 4:5f, and is divided into two parts 4:4a–5c and 5d–e by the particle conjunction כִּי and the particle adverb בֵּן, which occur in 4:5d. In the first part, clause 4:4a, not having a co-ordinate or a subordinate conjunction, is asyndetic, while clauses 4:4c and 4:4g are elliptical, being dependent on the imperative verbs בֹּאוּ and הִבִּיאוּ in 4:4a and 4:4f respectively. It is interesting to note that the infinitive absolute, וְקִטַּר in 4:5a, here functions as an imperative,²³³ thus creating a succession of the imperatives בֹּאוּ (4:4a), וּפִשְׁעוּ (4:4b), הִרְבּוּ (4:4d), וְהִבִּיאוּ (4:4f), וְקִרְאוּ (4:5b) and הִשְׁמִיעוּ (4:5c).²³⁴ In the second part, בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (4:5e) being vocative, connects to 4:5d, where the *qatal*-form אֶהְבַּתֶּם (you have loved) provides background information.

²³² Here כִּי emphasises the divine oath, thus complementing the predicate שָׁבַע (to swear). See Blane Conklin, *Oath Formulas in Biblical Hebrew*, LSAWS 5 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 48–50.

²³³ Wolff remarks, it is possible for the infinite absolute to function as an imperative, while it is itself among imperative forms. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 209.

²³⁴ Thus says Limburg, “the imitation of a call to worship in 4:4–5 lists a series of seven verbs in the imperative or its equivalent: come, transgress, multiply, bring, offer, proclaim, and publish. After this list of seven comes

Unit 4:6a–d has a further passage of direct speech, with the divine speech formula **נְאֻם־יְהוָה** (4:6d) marking the conclusion. The particle conjunction **גַּם** (*however*, 4:6a) is attached to a first person singular pronoun **אֲנִי** (*I*) which represents the Lord. Thus, the *qatal*-form **נָתַתִּי** (*I gave*) indicates an action of the Lord. The elliptical clause 4:6b is dependent on that verb in *qatal*-form, and as both of these first two clauses are dependent on each other, they describe two actions of the same subject, the Lord. Three occurrences of the second person masculine plural suffixes **לָכֶם** (4:6a), **עָרֵיכֶם** (4:6a) and **מְקוֹמֵיכֶם** (4:6b), detail the object of the Lord's actions. In clause 4:6c the negative particle **לֹא** (*not*), precedes the *qatal*-form **שָׁבַתְתִּם** (*returned*), which denotes a contrary action. However, 4:6a, 6b and 6c are verbally congruent, thereby maintaining the unit in the discursive background position.

Yet again, direct speech without any introductory formula can be seen in unit 4:7a–8e. The particle conjunction **גַּם**, earlier noted in 4:6a, reoccurs in 4:7a where it, once again, precedes a first person singular pronoun. In this case, however, **אֲנִי** is replaced by **אֶנְכִּי**. Clauses 4:7a–c contain verbs in *qatal*, *w^eqatal*²³⁵ and *yiqtol* forms. These actions **מָנַעְתִּי** (*I withheld*, 4:7a), **וְהַמְתַּרְתִּי** (*I caused rain to fall*, 4:7b) and **לֹא אֶמְתִּיר** (*I caused no rain to fall*, 4:7c) are revealed, by the use of the first person singular form, to be ones performed by the Lord, and provide background information. Interestingly, in 4:7b and 7c, with the repetition of the verb forms **וְהַמְתַּרְתִּי** and **אֶמְתִּיר** having the same root and conjugation, and the prepositional phrases **עַל־עִיר אַחַת** (*on one city*) and **וְעַל־עִיר אַחַת** (*but on another city*), a chiasm is formed.²³⁶ The asyndetic construction of 4:7d distinguishes it from the previous two clauses. Worthy of note is that the verbal clause 4:7f, **אֲשֶׁר־לֹא תִמְטִיר עָלֶיהָ** (*which was not rained on*), divides 4:7e into 4:7eα, **וְהַלְקָהּ** (*but the other field*) and 4:7eβ, **תִּיבֶשׁ** (*dried up*). 4:8a, a *w^eqatal* verbal clause (**וְנָעוּ שְׂתִימִם שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים אֲלֵעִיר אַחַת**) differs from 4:7f and 4:7eβ, clauses with *yiqtol*-forms. 4:8b and 4:8c coming immediately after, contain the verbs in infinitive (**לְשָׁתוֹת**, *to drink*) and *yiqtol*-forms (**וְלֹא יִשְׁפְּעוּ**, *but they went unsatisfied*) respectively. Even though the infinitive

the punch line of the saying, “for so you love to do, O people of Israel.”” Limburg, “Sevenfold Structures in the Book of Amos,” 220.

²³⁵ Francisco Javier Del Barco Del Barco, “Text in Context: A Textual-Linguistic Approach to Amos 4: 7–8,” *Sef 62* (2002): 235–37, notes, the *w^eqatal*-form, used with a future perspective, differs from the other verb forms (*qatal*, *wayyiqtol*), which are used with a past perspective in 4:6–11.

²³⁶ Thus, Carroll R. observes verse 7 and outlines the rhetorical effect as follows:

city:	verb + (prep. +) object	(prep. +) object + verb [chiasm]
field:	subject + verb	subject + relative clause + verb.

See Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 212.

does not reveal a verbal perspective, the verbal forms in 4:8a and 8c place the text in the discursive background, looking backwards. The *w^e-x-qatal* clause, וְלֹא־שִׁבַּתְּם עָדִי (yet you did not return to me) in 4:8d, coming immediately before the concluding divine speech formula, reflects the contrary result previously seen in 4:6c.

Action by the Lord is once more suggested at the beginning of unit 4:9a–d by the inclusion of the first person verb in *qatal*-form הִכִּיתִי (*I struck*). Notably, between 4:9a and 9b, a second person masculine plural suffix occurs a total of five times, וְכַרְמֵיכֶם, גִּבּוֹתֵיכֶם, אֲתָכֶם, וְזִיתְכֶם, וְתִאֲנִיכֶם. That the action of the Lord in 4:9a did not achieve the desired outcome is evident from the verbal clause וְלֹא־שִׁבַּתְּם עָדִי (yet you did not return to me), 4:9c, which contains the particle preposition first person suffix (עָדִי). The divine speech formula נֹאמַר־יְהוָה 4:9d concludes the unit.

The syntactic construction of unit 4:10a–e is the same as that of the previous units, with 4:10d and 10e being carbon copies of 4:9c and 9d respectively. Likewise, 4:10a, 10b (an asyndetic clause) and 10c contain repeated occurrences of a second person masculine plural suffix (כֶּם). The direct speech 4:10a–d includes the verbs in *qatal*-form שְׁלַחְתָּ (*I sent*) and הֲרַגְתָּ (*I killed*), both of which place the text in the discursive background, and also a change in tense from *qatal* to the *wayyiqtol* (וַאֲעֲלֶה) which is a *Sproßerzählung* in 4:10c.²³⁷

The syntactic construction of unit 4:11a–f differs from the above-mentioned, in that the direct speech starts asyndetically. Similarly to the previous direct speeches, 4:11a displays an action of the Lord in *qatal*-form הִפְכֵתִי (*I destroyed*). However, it is interrupted by the inclusion in 4:11b of the nominal clause in the third person, כִּמְהִפְכַת אֱלֹהִים אֶת־סֹדֶם וְאֶת־עֲמֹרָה (as God overturned Sodom and Gomorrah). This kind of usage of the third person is rare in direct speech. The particle כִּי which introduces the clause, clearly associates the action of the Lord with an earlier act. The direct speech resumes in 4:11c, where due to a shift in tense from *qatal* to *wayyiqtol*, a *Sproßerzählung* is observed. While each of the verb forms conveys the background information, the change is significant as the text is presented in both the discursive and narrative forms. The concluding direct speech formula נֹאמַר־יְהוָה (4:11f) immediately follows the end of the direct speech in 4:11e, a verbal clause, which, by its recurrence, emphasises the futility of the Lord's actions to bring Israel back to himself.

²³⁷ Schneider, *Grammatik des Biblischen Hebräisch*, 199–200.

Although unit 4:12a–c is neither introduced nor concluded with a divine speech formula, it is in fact a direct speech unit. Distinguishing factors marking this are the repeated occurrences of the first person verb in *yiqtol*-form אֶעֱשֶׂה (*I will do*) and the second person suffix לָךְ in 4:12a and 12c, as is the presence of the vocative יְשָׁרָאֵל in 4:12b. The particle adverbs לָכֵן and כֵּן at the beginning of the unit serve to draw a conclusion from what has previously been stated, with the *yiqtol*-form, immediately following, placing this conclusion in the foreground.

The final unit, 4:12d–13g, contains further direct speech which is divided by the phrase כִּי הִנֵּה in 4:13a into two parts: 4:12d–f and 4:13a–g. The first of these opens with the verb in imperative form, הִכֹּן (*be prepared*), followed by the verb in infinitive form, לִקְרֹאת (*to meet*). Connecting these two clauses to one another is the foreground perspective of each. Furthermore, attaching the second person singular suffix to the noun in 4:12e אֱלֹהֶיךָ (*your God*), infers that the prospective confrontation will be personal.²³⁸ The second part 4:13a–g opens with the phrase כִּי הִנֵּה and then continues through a series of verbs in participle form, namely, יוֹצֵר (*form*) in 4:13a, בֹּרֵא (*create*) in 13b, וּמְגִיד (*declare*) in 13c, עֹשֶׂה (*make*) in 13e and דֹרֵךְ (*tread*) in 13f, each of them an action of the Lord. The interrogative particle מָה (*what*) in 4:13d interrupts this chain of participles, though an action does occur. It is also important to note the asyndetic structure עֹשֶׂה שֶׁחֵר עֵינָהּ (*the one who makes the dawn to dark*) in 4:13e. Thus, two accounts of the Lord are given, the first occurring in 4:13a–d, with 4:13e and 13f providing the second. 4:13g, also an asyndetic clause, contains the elongated divine name יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-צְבָאוֹת (*the LORD, the God of hosts*), a suitable conclusion for both the aforementioned descriptions.

²³⁸ Allen, “Amos, Prophet of Solidarity,” 46.

Having completed the analysis of each of the minor units in 4:1–13, I will now focus on the elements that unite them.

(i) 4:6a–11f

The minor units which comprise unit 4:6–11, and which show structural similarities, are analysed first with the purpose of demonstrating how they integrate with the remainder of the minor units.²³⁹ The following similarities establish the link between the units:

- All are direct speeches, and all conclude with the divine speech formula **נְאֻם-יְהוָה**, 4:6d, 8e, 9d, 10e, 11f.
- The phrase **וְלֹא-שָׁכַחְתִּים עָדִי** (4:6c, 8d, 9c, 10d, 11e) precedes the divine speech formula in each case.
- Each unit contains a *qatal*-form in the first person masculine singular, **נִתְּתִי** (4:6a), **מְנַעַתִּי** (4:7a), **הִכִּיתִי** (4:9a), **שָׁלַחְתִּי** (4:10a) and **הִפְכֵּיתִי** (4:11a).
- All of the direct speeches open with *qatal*-forms, each of which indicates, not only the actions of the Lord, but also a number of times the people have disappointed him.
- The object of the verb consistently occurs in the second person masculine suffix form: **לָכֶם** (4:6a), **מֵכֶם** (4:7a), **אֶתְכֶם** (4:9a), **בָּכֶם** (4:10a) and **בְּכֶם** (4:11a).
- Each time, with the exception of 4:9a (**אֶתְכֶם**), where it is attached to a direct object marker, the object of the verb is preceded by a preposition, **לָכֶם** (4:6a), **מֵכֶם** (4:7a), **בָּכֶם** (4:10a), **בְּכֶם** (4:11a).²⁴⁰

Verses 4:6–11, combined as they are by the above structural parallelisms, form a single unit.

²³⁹ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 210, categorises unit 4:6–11 with the recurring refrain (4:6c, 8d, 9c, 10d, 11e) and the seven first person verbs along with the suffix **כֶּם** (4:6a [2x], 6b, 7a, 9a, 10a, 11a), as a skilful and well-ordered composition. Limburg, on the basis of the same seven first person verbs with the suffix **כֶּם** (the Lord's words of caution to his people), followed by the climax of the piece (4:12), arranges 4:6–12 in the colourfully named 'seven-plus-climax' series or 'seven-plus-one' model. Limburg, "Sevenfold Structures in the Book of Amos," 220.

²⁴⁰ Andersen and Freedman have outlined the various prepositions that are attached to 'you' as:

v 6a	<i>wēgam- 'ānī</i>	<i>nātattī lākem</i>	and	I gave to you
v 7a	<i>wēgam 'ānokī</i>	<i>māna 'tī mikkem</i>	and	I withheld from you
v 9a		<i>hikkētī 'etkem</i>		I smote you
v 10a		<i>šillaḥṭī bākem</i>		I sent down against you
v 11a		<i>hāpakṭī bākem</i>		I overthrew (some of) you.

See Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 437.

(ii) 4:4a–5f and 6a–11f

Unit 4:4a–5f and 6a–11f are similar in that they both consist of direct speeches, while having no introductory formula, but both conclude with divine speech formulas, which do, however, differ slightly in that 4:5f has *נָאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה* (אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה), whereas the simpler expression *נָאֻם יְהוֹה* is used in 4:6d, 8e, 9d, 10e, and 11f. Affirming the association between the units is the repeated occurrence in 4:6a–11f of the vocative *בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* in 4:5e, not referring to any persons in particular, but taking the more general second person plural form. However, the differences in the verbal character of the units should not be overlooked. The direct speech in 4:4a–5e occurs in the form of a series of imperatives and marks the text as foreground, whereas the *qatal*-forms used in 4:6a–11e provide the background information, looking backward. However, the particle *גַּם* at the beginning of 4:6a, is significant in that it marks both a contrast and the connection between the units.

(iii) 4:2a–3d and 4a–11f

The two units 4:2a–3d and 4a–11f have a number of elements in common. Here again, both units contain direct speeches, each marked with a divine speech formula, with the oath formula *נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה בְּקִדְשׁוֹ* (*the Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness*), introducing the direct speech in unit 4:2b–3d. Even though neither unit 4:4a–5f nor unit 6a–11f has an introductory formula, both have a concluding divine speech formula, as does unit 4:2a–3d. From 4:2a–11f on an identical formula *נָאֻם יְהוֹה*, is used in six of the seven cases, namely in 4:3d, 6d, 8e, 9d, 10e, and 11f, the exception being 4:5f, which employs the formula *נָאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה*. Also binding both units together is the use of the masculine plural form.

(iv) 4:12a–c and 2a–11f

Regarding 4:2a–11f and 4:12a–c, the first point to note is that the use of the first person singular form in 4:12a–c is in a direct speech, which, in contrast to the other direct speeches in the unit, namely, 4:2b–3c, 4a–5e, 6a–c, 7a–8d, 9a–c, 10a–d, 11a and 11c–e, has neither an introductory formula nor a concluding direct speech formula. The presence of *לֵכֵן* and *כִּי* at the opening of 4:12a is significant for a number of reasons, all of which indicate that the direct speech formulas from 4:2a right through to 4:12c are connected. Firstly, the phrase *לֵכֵן* points to 4:12a as being a concluding verse, one connected to the other direct speeches in 4:2a–11f, all of which are utterances of the Lord. In addition, the divine speech formulas and

the phrases לִכֶּן and כֹּה, though differing in format, function in exactly the same way, while the same second person masculine plural form is used in both units. As well as that, it can reasonably be concluded that the presence of the vocatives בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in 4:5e and יִשְׂרָאֵל in 4:12c establishes a further link.

(v) 4:2a–12c and 12d–13g

In terms of direct speech, unit 4:2a–12c and 4:12d–13g differ, in that in the former they are delivered by the Lord, whereas in the latter, where the Lord is presented in the third person singular form, the words are uttered by an unknown speaker, this being confirmed by the absence of a direct speech formula. This absence poses a question mark over how well they are connected, however, the presence of the Lord in both supports the argument that there is a relationship between the two. This is further strengthened by the use of the oath formula נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ in 4:2a, followed by the divine speech formulas נֹאֵם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה in 4:5f, and נֹאֵם יְהוִה in 4:6d, 8e, 9d, 10e, and 11f, and the divine naming אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת יְהוִה in 4:13g. Confirming the connection is the phrase, כִּי הִנֵּה, used emphatically in both 4:2b and 13a, and also the occurrences of the vocative יִשְׂרָאֵל in 4:5e, 12b and 12f.

(vi) 4:1a–h and 4:2a–13g

The imperative form שִׁמְעוּ at the beginning of unit 4:1a–h, which opens the pericope 4:1–13, acts as an invitation to hear the messages conveyed in the direct speeches contained in unit 4:2a–13g. It is immediately followed in 4:1b by the vocative פְּרוֹת הַבֶּשֶׂן whose dreadful actions are described by the participle verbal forms, עֹשָׂפוֹת, רֹצְצוֹת, אֹמְרוֹת in 4:1d, 1e and 1f respectively, which in turn explains the reasons for the utterances of the Lord in 4:2a–12c and for the concluding direct speech 4:12d–13g. The final unit, 4:12d–13g, also contains participle verbal forms (יֹצֵר, בֹּרָא, עֹשֶׂה, דֹּרֵךְ), this time detailing the actions of the Lord, which are, by nature, diametrically opposed to those occurring in unit 4:1a–h.

5.1.3 Summary

The syntactic features of unit 4:1–13 are as follows:

- Being largely composed of direct speeches, 4:2a–3d, 4a–5f, 6a–d, 7a–8e, 9a–d, 10a–e, 11a–f, 12a–c and 12d–13g, the unit takes the form of a discourse.

- The majority of the direct speeches are marked by divine speech formulas, נֶאֱמַם יְהוָה (4:2a–3d, 6a–d, 7a–8e, 9a–d, 10a–e, and 11a–f), while one is marked by נֶאֱמַם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (4:4a–5f). The divine speech formula נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּקֹדְשׁוֹ (*the Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness*), introduces the direct speech in 4:2a–3d. The first person singular, denoting the action of the Lord, is used in 4:12a–c, with the divine naming אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת occurring in 4:12d–13g.
- Both 4:1a–h and 4:12d–13g, the first and final units, contain participle verb forms.
- A second person plural suffix form appears in every unit.

5.2 TEXT-SEMANTICS: AMOS 4:1–13

5.2.1 Hear This Word, Cows of Bashan

4:1a–h, the first major unit, begins with the rather vague expression שְׁמָעוּ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה (*hear this word*) leaving it open to speculation as to which word is to be heard. Immediately following on this, the derogatory term cows of Bashan,²⁴¹ is used to describe the intended recipient of the word. 4:1d and 1e, seen to be parallel by the inclusion of the synonyms עָשָׂק (*to oppress*) and רָצַץ (*to trample*) and also דָּלִים (*poor*) and אֶבְיֹנִים (*needy*),²⁴² together clearly express the level of ill-treatment suffered by the weakest at the hands of the powerful. A socially accepted convention at that time was for the lords to act as servants of these *cows of Bashan*.²⁴³ However, while enjoying such privileges,²⁴⁴ they resorted to an unacceptable abuse of power in their oppression of the most vulnerable.²⁴⁵ The distressed state in which they left the people is in stark contrast to their own luxurious and self-indulgent lifestyle.²⁴⁶ They would be held to account for denying justice, through their heinous and immoral

²⁴¹ The identification of cows of Bashan will be considered in the pragmatic analysis.

²⁴² For a detailed explanation of דָּלִים and אֶבְיֹנִים, see Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 102–104.

²⁴³ The lords mentioned are not the husbands of the feminine figures, but the lords of the enslaved poor. For further explanation, see Terence Kleven, “The Cows of Bashan: A Single Metaphor at Amos 4:1–3,” *CBQ* 58 (1996): 220; van Wieringen, “Feminized Men in Amos 4:1–3,” 405.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Izabela Jaruzelska, *Amos and the Officialdom in the Kingdom of Israel: The Socio-Economic Position of the Officials in the Light of the Biblical, the Epigraphic and Archaeological Evidence*, *Seria Socjologia* 25 (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1998).

²⁴⁵ Peter Altmann, *Economics in Persian-Period Biblical Texts: Their Interactions with Economic Developments in the Persian Period and Earlier Biblical Traditions*, *FAT* 109 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 67.

²⁴⁶ Paul F. Jacobs, “Cows of Bashan: A Note on the Interpretation of Amos 4:1,” *JBL* 104 (1985): 110.

behaviour, and it is they who must listen to the word of the Lord.²⁴⁷ This word is recorded in 4:2a–13g, the second major unit.

5.2.2 The Lord Swears an Oath

Unit 4:2a–3d opens with a solemn statement of the Lord. יהוה and אֲדֹנָי in 4:2a which represent the Lord²⁴⁸ and לְאֲדֹנֵיהֶם in 4:1f, which indicates lords or masters, are similar though not identical. However, regarding the actions of each, there is a distinct disparity, where in the latter case the lords are requested to serve, but in the former the Lord swears an oath of his own accord and by his holiness alone.²⁴⁹ The fact that the word קֹדֶשׁ (*holiness*), which when used in the divine realm, refers to things sacred – persons, places, objects, rites, religious worship²⁵⁰ – is employed here, is worthy of note. By contrast, it calls to mind the unholy and unjust deeds perpetrated against the poor and needy, recorded in 4:1d–h; actions which explain the reasoning behind the solemn pronouncements in 4:2a–3d. The verb שָׁבַע (*to swear*) not only heightens the sense of the seriousness of the situation, but, coming as it does in the form of an oath, adds a degree of certainty. In general, an oath can promise either renewal or destruction. However, the one delivered here, and couched in threatening language, leaves little doubt about the displeasure of the Lord. Because of their unjustifiable behaviour, misery is to be their lot.

(i) הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים עֲלֵיכֶם (*behold, days are coming upon you*)²⁵¹

The הִנֵּה + בָּאִים construction opens this portent of things to come. A noticeable shift in tone as well as a note of sarcasm can be detected, as the verb בֹּא (*to come*) is used in a much more threatening manner than the similar verb בָּרָא (*to bring*) in 4:1g. In 4:1g the cows of Bashan

²⁴⁷ Wilgus provides a concise description of the misdeeds of the cows of Bashan, which in every way offend the Lord, noting that these cows are making wrongful gain at the expense of the weak, crushing the poor, and all the while living in the lap of luxury. The depiction is not of those oppressing others in order to survive, but one of satisfying a desire for a luxurious lifestyle while showing complete disregard for the poor. Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 102.

²⁴⁸ Gordon H. Johnston, “אֲדֹנָי,” *NIDOTTE* 1:256–61.

²⁴⁹ Thus, Wolff remarks, holiness which is against all human infidelity equates to the purest and highest quality of being as holy as God himself. Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 206. Mays also stresses that holiness is the forceful, awesome, menacing power of the Lord. Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, 72.

²⁵⁰ For a variety of applications regarding קֹדֶשׁ, see Jackie A. Naudé, “קֹדֶשׁ,” *NIDOTTE* 3:877–87.

²⁵¹ הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים is a recurring phrase in the Hebrew Bible (14 times in the book of Jeremiah, once in the book of Samuel, Kings and Isaiah, and 3 times in the book of Amos), in most cases pertaining to divine judgement. However, the usage of the phrase has various meanings in relation to judgement: (i) it indicates punishment in the form of humiliation, suffering, annihilation, famine, wandering, exile; (ii) it denotes promise, hope, a new covenant and reinstatement after judgement. See Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 109.

commanded ‘their lords’ (אֲדֹנֵיהֶם) to bring something to drink, whereas, what they actually receive is days of punishment from the real Lord (אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה), attested in 4:2a–b.²⁵² These days will bring grief and hardship, instead of joy and prosperity, attested by the following phrases; וְנִשָּׂא (*he will lift*) in 4:2c, תִּצְאָנָה (*will go out*) in 4:3a, וְהִשְׁלַכְתָּנָה (*will be thrown out*) in 4:3c, בְּצִנּוֹת (*hooks*) in 4:2c, and בְּסִירוֹת דּוּגָה (*fish-hooks*), which suggest some form of punishment.

(ii) וְנִשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם בְּצִנּוֹת וְאֶחְרֵיתְכֶם בְּסִירוֹת דּוּגָה (*he will lift you using hooks and the remainder of you using fish-hooks*)

The allusion to hooks and fish-hooks conjures up unpleasant images of captives being held and painfully lifted up, unable to break free no matter how hard they struggle.²⁵³ Hooks are used by those moving cows and therefore a reference to the cows of Bashan, being lifted by hooks out of their comfortable surroundings and being led out through the breaches, is very apt. The irony is that those responsible for the oppression of the weak are now themselves punished.²⁵⁴

(iii) וּפְרָצִים תִּצְאָנָה אִשָּׁה נְגִדָה וְהִשְׁלַכְתָּנָה הַהַרְמוֹנָה (*through the breaches you will go out, one woman after the other and you will be thrown out toward Harmon*)

Interestingly, יָצָא (*to go out*) in 4:3a, which is normally used in the sense of a temporary departure from somewhere, is followed by שָׁלַח (*to throw*) in 4:3c, and when used together, the suggestion is that the leaving is long lasting or even permanent. The bringing down of the wrath of the Lord on the cows of Bashan results in their banishment to Harmon. Overall, the oath is negative in tone, with the accompanying punishments coming in a variety of forms, such as death (4:2c–d), humiliation (4:3a–b) and also deportation (4:3c). Even though 4:2b–3c does not reveal the identity of the person responsible for administering the punishments, it is clear from the phrase וְנִשָּׂא (*he will lift*) in 4:2c that it is not the Lord.

²⁵² Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 257–58.

²⁵³ Cf. 2 Kgs 19:28; 2 Chr 33:11; Jer 16:16; Ezek 29:4; Hab 1:15, where captives were led away by hooks through the nose, by their victors. van Wieringen explores the use of the words hooks and fish-hooks in the context of the cow imagery. After being slaughtered cows are hung on hooks. Also cows are transported from one place to another using hooks, this being a reference to exile. See van Wieringen, “Feminized Men in Amos 4:1–3,” 406–407.

²⁵⁴ Christine Hayes, *Introduction to the Bible*, Open Yale Courses Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 254.

Another point of note is the inclusion of the divine speech formula **נְאֻם־יְהוָה** in 4:3d which adds emphasis to the content of the oath.

5.2.3 A Sarcastic Invitation

In unit 4:4a–5f the character of the communication is transformed from that where once words of punishment were heard, to that which revolves principally around sacrifices and how they are conducted.²⁵⁵ This is well-reflected in the language employed, for example, **זִבְחֵי** (*sacrifices*) in 4:4f, **מַעֲשֵׂר** (*tithes*) in 4:4g, **קִטְרֹן** (*kindle*), **הֶמְצִץ** (*a leaven-sacrifice*), **תְּהִלָּה** (*praise*), all in 4:5a, and **נְדָבָה** (*freewill offerings*) in 4:5b. Induced by the opposing themes of sin and sacrifice a sense of sarcasm is diffused throughout the entire unit.²⁵⁶ The invitation to go to Bethel, in fact Beth-El (*house of God*), a holy place, and to commit sin there by indulging in insincere practices and thereby making a mockery of their worship, is laced with sarcasm.²⁵⁷ This is compounded by the invitation to go to Gilgal, an important and historic place of worship, to continue their hypocritical behaviour.²⁵⁸ The sense of irony is maintained by the repeated use of **פָּשַׁע** (*to commit sin*) in 4:4b and 4:4e, and also by the selection of Bethel and Gilgal as the centres in which these acts were to take place. Then attention turns to the actual performance of these sacrifices in 4:4f–5b. The presence of the second person masculine plural suffixes in both **זִבְחֵיכֶם** and **מַעֲשֵׂרְהֵיכֶם** leads credence to the belief that the sacrifices were not offered as an act of honouring the Lord,²⁵⁹ but more to create for themselves a feeling of self-satisfaction.²⁶⁰ The use of sarcasm very effectively illustrates how the Lord,

²⁵⁵ Smith, *Amos*, 2, who characterises these practices as proud demonstrations of piety.

²⁵⁶ Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 91; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 434; Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 206; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 263; Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 113–23; Viberg, “Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony,” 110; Austin Vanlier Hunter, *Seek the Lord!: A Study of the Meaning and Function of the Exhortations in Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Zephaniah* (Baltimore: St. Mary’s Seminary & University, 1982), 70; Richard Alan Fuhr and Gary E. Yates, *The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 126.

²⁵⁷ Thomas Jemielity, *Satire and the Hebrew Prophets*, Literary currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 54.

²⁵⁸ For a discussion on Bethel and Gilgal, see Hans M. Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos: Studies in the Preaching of Am 2, 7B–8; 4, 1–13; 5, 1–27; 6, 4–7; 8, 14*, VTSup 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 49–54.

²⁵⁹ Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 219; Smith, *Amos*, 143.

²⁶⁰ Therefore, Soggin stresses, the cult offered at Bethel and Gilgal does not come about as a result of divine decisions but of human aspirations, and is therefore illegitimate. Soggin, *The Prophet Amos*, 71. See also Henry McKeating, *The books of Amos, Hosea and Micah*, CBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971; 1976; 1984; 2010), 33; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 265; Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 210; Robert Gordis, “Studies in the Book of Amos,” *PAAJR* 46 (1979): 216; Mark W. Bartusch, *Understanding Dan: An*

who has been disobeyed by the people, would prefer their faithfulness, rather than the charade of their empty acts of public worship.²⁶¹ The verb בוא occurring in 4:4a and 4f and previously in 4:1g and 2b has in each case a negative connotation, from the support of the lords for the cows of Bashan (4:1g), to their distressing days of punishments (4:2b), to the irony regarding sin (4:4a) and sacrificial offerings (4:4f). Karl Möller explains it thus:

- The lords are commanded by the cows of Bashan to *bring* them something to drink (הביאה ונשתה).
- Instead, however, they get days of punishment *coming down* upon them (באים עליכם).
- To *come* (באו) to Bethel and Gilgal, which is equivalent to sinning (פשעו), will not ward off the punishment.
- As the people are inspired by wholly selfish motives (כי כן אהבתם), to *bring* (הביאו) offerings and sacrifices is not helpful either.²⁶²

5.2.4 “Yet You Did Not Return to Me”

Unit 4:6a–11f contains a number of significant distinguishing features.

- The recurring divine speech formula נאם־יהוה (*utterance of the Lord*) in 4:6d, 8e, 9d, 10e and 11f.
- The recurring phrase ולא־שבתם עדי (*yet you did not return to me*) in 4:6c, 8d, 9c, 10d and 11e, precedes the divine speech formula.
- A litany of punishments previously inflicted on the people.

נקיון שנים (*clean teeth*) and חסר לחם (*shortage of food*) in 4:6a–d.

מנעתי את־הגשם (*withhold the rain*), תיבש (*dried up*) and ונעו (*tottered*) in 4:7a–8e.

Exegetical Study of a Biblical City, Tribe and Ancestor, JSOTSup 379 (London; New York: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 240, notes the attitude of the worshippers.

²⁶¹ By quoting the prophets Hosea and Micah, Smith highlights the message communicated:

Hosea preached God was more interested in fidelity than oblations (Hos 6:8) and Micah made it known that God required justice, charity and humility, not a thousand rams or ten thousand rivers of oil (Mic 6:6–8). God’s desire is to encounter the person who finds contentment in God, not the person who is merely performing meaningless rituals. Smith, *Amos*, 143.

²⁶² Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 267.

הִכִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם בַּשֹּׁד וּבִירְקוֹן (*I struck you with scorching and mildew*) and יֹאכַל (*devoured*) in 4:9a–d.

הֲרַגְתִּי בְחֶרֶב בְּחוּרֵיכֶם עִם שְׂבִי סוּסֵיכֶם (*I killed your young men with the sword along with your seized horses*) in 4:10a–e.

הִפְכַּתִּי בָכֶם כַּמֶּהֱפַכְתָּ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־סֹדֶם וְאֶת־עֹמֹרָה (*I overturned you as God overturned Sodom and Gomorrah*) in 4:11a–f.

- The use of the first person singular form confirms that the Lord is the one responsible for these inflictions.

אָנִי (*I*), נָתַתִּי (*I gave*) and עָדִי (*to me*) in 4:6a–d.

אָנִי (*I*), מְנַעַתִּי (*I withheld*), לֹא אָמַתִּיר (*I had not sent rain*) and עָדִי (*to me*) in 4:7a–8e.

הִכִּיתִי (*I struck you*) and עָדִי (*to me*) in 4:9a–d.

שָׁלַחַת (*I sent*), הֲרַגְתִּי (*I killed*) and עָדִי (*to me*) in 4:10a–e.

הִפְכַּתִּי (*I overturned*) and עָדִי (*to me*) in 4:11a–f.

By taking a closer look at each unit individually, the semantic features are more easily understood. The presence of the two particle conjunctions וְ and גַּם which are used adverbially at the opening of 4:6a–d, denote continuity between this unit and 4:4a–5f, the preceding unit. Any expectations the people had of receiving rewards for their sacrificial offerings contrasts sharply with the actual response of the Lord.²⁶³ Famine (4:6), drought (4:7–8), crop failure (4:9), and conflict (4:10) are sent down upon them.²⁶⁴ The double use of the first person singular pronoun, first standing alone (אָנִי) and then with the verb (נָתַתִּי) serves to emphasise the involvement of the divine. Most often, the verb נָתַן (*to give*) is used in a positive sense, however, what the Lord is offering here is quite the opposite.²⁶⁵ This becomes obvious when the objects of the verb נָתַתִּי are made known – נִקְיֹון שָׁנִים (*clean teeth*, 4:6a) and וְחֶסֶר לֶחֶם (*shortage of food*, 4:6b) – with a parallelism occurring between the phrases בְּכָל־עֲרֵיכֶם (*in all your cities*) in 4:6a and בְּכָל־מְקוֹמֵיכֶם (*in all your places*) in 4:6b.

²⁶³ Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 96; Soggin, *The Prophet Amos*, 74; Smith, *Amos*, 144; Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 210–12; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 270.

²⁶⁴ Mark Daniel Carroll R., “Can the Prophets Shed Light on Our Worship Wars? How Amos Evaluates Religious Ritual,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 8 (2005): 223.

²⁶⁵ Michael A. Grisanti, “נתן,” *NIDOTTE* 3:205–11.

The expression *clean teeth* is a metaphor for a shortage of foodstuff due to famine conditions,²⁶⁶ and further underlined by the phrase *shortage of food*.²⁶⁷ All indications are that these conditions are not confined to some small areas but affect all places with serious implications for the entire population.

The theme of punishment continues in unit 4:7a–8e. The role of the Lord in the execution of the punishments is evident from the start through the use of the terms, אָנֹכִי (I) מְנַעֲתִי (I withheld), וְהִמְטַרְתִּי (I had sent rain), לֹא אֶמְטִיר (I had not sent rain), עָדִי (to me) and also through the inclusion of the concluding divine formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה (utterance of the LORD). Withholding the rain for three months could have very serious consequences and call to mind the famine alluded to in the previous unit. Later, rain is caused to fall in some places, but not in others. With the dried up fields unable to produce, crop failure inevitably results in misery among the people. Chaos and disorder ensue with people struggling to get from one city to another in search of water to drink, without success, however. As only some areas were afflicted, the entire episode seems to be deliberately designed to cause disharmony. This is in contrast to the famine previously referred to in 4:6a–b, where no place was excluded.²⁶⁸ However, withholding rain or causing it to fall at an inappropriate time or in an indiscriminate manner is no less grave. Mark Daniel Carroll R., by means of a chiasmic arrangement between the field and the city, demonstrates how the devastation in 4:7–8 is total and how the whole country has been impacted.²⁶⁹

4.7a field: rain withheld before the harvest (disaster)

b city: uneven rainfall among the cities (disaster)

a' field: uneven rainfall, crops withered (disaster + result)

4.8b' city: people wandered, were not satisfied (result)

The image of sections of the population staggering from city to city in search of water calls to mind the phrase וְנִשְׁתָּה (let us drink) in 4:1f–h, an indicator of the comforts enjoyed by the

²⁶⁶ Here clean teeth refers to the shortage of food brought about by the famine sent down by the Lord.

²⁶⁷ Chuck Missler, “Supplemental Notes: The Books of Joel and Amos,” 45, who refers to crop failure as well as famine.

²⁶⁸ Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 126.

²⁶⁹ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 212; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 271.

cows of Bashan. It is ironic then, that those so used to luxury and having all their needs provided for, cannot now get even a drink of water and remain unsatisfied.²⁷⁰

The disaster depicted in unit 4:9a–d creates the impression that, in regard to the punishments, there is an incremental increase in the level of severity each time, and appears more grave here than in the previous units. In this unit the concentration is on the attack on nature itself. Drought and wheat disease (4:9a), the disappearance of gardens and vineyards (4:9a) and the devouring by the locusts of fig trees and olive trees represent a threat to what sustains life itself: no more joy and happiness and the ending of prosperity, respectively. Death, the most severe punishment yet, is recorded in unit 4:10a–e, *עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁבִי סוּסֶיְכֶם* (I killed your young men with the sword along with your seized horses, 4:10b). This is immediately followed by unit 4:11a–f, which contains a reference to destruction so complete, it could be compared to that which devastated Sodom and Gomorrah,²⁷¹ emphasising once more the gravity of their treachery.

The progressive nature of the disasters and their impacts can be outlined as follows:²⁷²

- | | | |
|------|------------------------|--|
| i. | lack of bread | physical pain, starvation |
| ii. | withholding of rain | drought, staggering, dissatisfaction |
| iii. | wheat disease, locusts | blight, pestilence, ruination of crops |
| iv. | enemy invasion | slaying of young men |

The disasters recorded in 4:6a–11f, though appearing to be destructive, are in fact aimed at reconciliation, attested by the recurring phrase *וְלֹא־שָׁבְתֶם עָדִי* (yet you did not return to me).

²⁷⁰ Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 279.

²⁷¹ Wolff notes that, occurring verbatim in Isa 13:19b and Jer 50:40 (applied to Babylon in the same way), and almost verbatim in Jer 49:18 (applied to Edom in the same manner) and Deut 29:22 [23] (similarly applied to Israel) is the expression “as God overturned Sodom and Gomorrah” (כַּמֶּהִפְכַּת אֱלֹהִים אֶת־סֹדֶם וְאֶת־עֹמֶרָה v 11). See Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 214.

²⁷² Most scholars agree that there is, in the form of disasters, a progression in the divine judgement recorded in 4:6–11. Wilgus, in particular concentrates on the advancement of the plagues, detailing this from famine, to drought, followed by the destruction of crops, then death and finally widespread ruin, and thus the nature of each. He continues, to tell of the Lord withholding provisions intended for Israel in the first three plagues. The fourth introduces a plague sent from heaven, and, apparently, a foreign enemy brandishing the sword. Then, the option of the withholding of provisions is replaced by the sending down of misfortune and ruination, and total destruction. See Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 129.

This expression of the Lord's mercy reveals two things:²⁷³ First, it was always the intention of the Lord to bring the people back to him, not to destroy them,²⁷⁴ and second, the refusal of the sons of Israel to mend their ways and to return to him.²⁷⁵ The intention is to rid Israel of all evil, namely the oppression of the weakest (4:1) and the futile offerings and sacrifices, such as at Bethel and Gilgal (4:4–5). The Lord longs for them to turn away from this behaviour and awaits their repentance.²⁷⁶ It could be mistakenly inferred from וְלֹא־שָׁבְתָם עָדִי that the Lord had failed in his attempts of bringing the people back. The failure, however, lay with the people themselves. Failing on every count, they refused to return to the Lord or to respond positively to the punishments, and they were unable to comprehend the motivation behind the disasters, not even realising that the punishments were the work of the Lord.²⁷⁷ The level of their obstinacy is revealed by their refusal to repent, even when their very lives were exposed to extreme danger.²⁷⁸

The short direct speech in 4:12a–c forms the conclusion of the litany of disasters outlined in 4:6a–11f. The particle לָכֵן at the beginning of 4:12a, which marks this conclusion, facilitates the transition from the preceding events and serves to shift the focus of the text from the calamities sent by the Lord and Israel's disappointing response (4:6–11) to what the Lord is proposing to do further.²⁷⁹ The first person אֶעֱשֶׂה (*I will do*) in 4:12a and again in 4:12c reaffirms the presence of the Lord in this direct speech, with the vocative יִשְׂרָאֵל in 4:12b making it apparent that the actions are directed against Israel. The *yiqtol*-form אֶעֱשֶׂה occurring in both 4:12a and 12c, suggests that something is about to happen, though there is no specific mention of what the Lord intends to do.

²⁷³ Occurring in various forms, the word שָׁב is used to denote motion and, in this case, specifically to signify repentance and a turning back to God. See J. A. Thompson and Elmer A. Martens, “שָׁב,” *NIDOTTE* 4:55–59.

²⁷⁴ Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 220.

²⁷⁵ Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 97.

²⁷⁶ Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 143; Mark J. Boda, *Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 310–11.

²⁷⁷ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 211, describes it as a litany of great misfortunes, a failure to recognize failed divine interventions and a refusal on the part of the people to respond positively.

²⁷⁸ Christopher R. Smith, *Prophets before the Exile: Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk*, Understanding the books of the Bible (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 23, compares Israel's obstinacy to that of the Egyptians and of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah who, for their stubbornness along with their failure to comply with God's commands, were made to suffer.

²⁷⁹ Besides two nuances in the expression לָכֵן כֹּה אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ, one referring to the punishments listed in 4:4–11 and the second alluding to forthcoming judgements, Park, pointing to the preliminary pronouncement of the judgement in 4:2, suggests a third possibility. See Park, *The Book of Amos as Composed and Read in Antiquity*, 86.

5.2.5 Be Prepared to Meet Your God

The nature of the instruction given to Israel *הִכֵּן לִקְרַאת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ* (*be prepared to meet your God*) in 4:12 immediately gives rise to speculation about its meaning. It could be understood to mean the infliction of a punishment more harsh than those which had already been brought down on the people. However, given that the previous chastisements had no effect on them, it is unlikely that the threat of something more severe, total destruction, would produce the desired outcome. Even though all previous attempts at encouraging repentance failed, this invitation could be interpreted as being a sign of the Lord's desire to bring about reconciliation, thus allowing him to pass a more favourable judgement on Israel.²⁸⁰ It is inevitable that they will meet the Lord and they are advised not to waste this opportunity and to prepare well for their encounter with him.²⁸¹

A detailed description of the Lord's omnipotence is provided in verses in 4:13a–g.²⁸² The phrase *כִּי הִנֵּה*, which opens the description, also occurs in 4:2b, but in a different context.²⁸³ In 4:2b it relates to a judgement handed down through the swearing of an oath, whereas in 4:13a it is more concerned with emphasising the distinctiveness of the Lord. The impressive nature of the power of the Lord can be appreciated through references to five actions that are attributed to him.²⁸⁴ He is variously described as: (i) the former of the mountains, (ii) the creator of the wind, (iii) the messenger of mankind, (iv) the one who turns the dawn to darkness, and (v) the one who makes a path over the heights of the earth.²⁸⁵ All of these

²⁸⁰ Harper observes that over and over again the Lord has signalled his unhappiness at Israel's behaviour by sending drought, famine, blight of crops, pestilence and conflict, as well as an earthquake; but alas! they have not returned. What, therefore, remains to impose on them? In any event, Israel must prepare for an encounter with the Lord. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 90; Hunter, *Seek the Lord*, 121–22.

²⁸¹ Observing the occurrence of the personal pronoun in *אֲלֵהֶיךָ*, Möller points out the people's personal responsibility regarding the covenant with God. Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 283.

²⁸² In this regard see John D. W. Watts, *Vision and Prophecy in Amos: 1955 Faculty Lectures Baptist Theological Seminary, Rüschlikon/Zh, Switzerland* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 52–67. He deals with all three hymns (the alternative term 'descriptions of the Lord' is used in this thesis) one after the other with its "Sitz im Leben." See also Stefan Paas, *Creation and Judgement: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets*, OTS 47 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 198–326, who comprehensively examined the hymns in Amos, interpreting content and setting, style and structure, as well as their function. Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*. The doxologies have been remarked upon extensively in pages 127–39. Gavin Cox, "The 'Hymn' of Amos: An Ancient Flood Narrative," *JSOT* 38 (2013): 81–108.

²⁸³ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 216.

²⁸⁴ Stefan Paas, "Seeing and Singing: Visions and Hymns in the Book of Amos," *VT* 52 (2002): 255.

²⁸⁵ James R. Linville, *Amos and the Cosmic Imagination*, SOTSMS (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 93–94, who describes that the five participial clauses occurring before the acclamation of the divine name as being

expressions symbolize the omnipotence of the Lord and his power over all creation. Having been made aware of this, Israel should understand that they, as part of God's creation, should prepare well for their meeting with him. It is fitting that the words close with the acclamation יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ (*the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name*)²⁸⁶ as it conveys very well the sense of an all-powerful God, although the divine name יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת (*the LORD, the God of hosts*) is rather vague.²⁸⁷

5.2.6 Summary

The principal theme recurring through unit 4:1–13 is the refusal by Israel to return to the Lord.

- The direct speech is mainly concerned with punishments inflicted on Israel because of its defiance of the Lord's commands, the exception to this being unit 4:4a–5f where the Lord sarcastically issues orders to the cows of Bashan.²⁸⁸ The vocabulary employed throughout very effectively conveys the sense of frustration felt by the Lord. As the unit progresses, the level of severity of the chastisements increases as can be seen from the list below.

שָׁבַע (*to swear*) in 4:2a, יָמִים בָּאִים (*days are coming*) in 4:2b, בְּצִנּוֹת (*hooks*) in 4:2c, בְּסִירֹת דּוּגָה (*fish-hooks*) in 4:2d, וְהִשְׁלַכְתָּהּ (*you will be thrown out*) in 4:3c, נִקְיוֹן שִׁנַּיִם (*clean teeth*) in 4:6a, חֶסֶר לֶחֶם (*shortage of food*) in 4:6b, מְנַעַתִּי אֶת־הַגֶּשֶׁם (*withheld the rain*) in 4:7a, תִּיבֶשׂ (*dried up*) in 4:7g, וָנָעוּ (*tottered*) in 4:8a, הִכִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם בַּשֶּׁדֶן וּבִירְקוֹן (*I struck you with scorching and mildew*) in 4:9a, יָאָכַל (*devoured*) in 4:9b, דָּבָר (*plague*) in 4:10a, עַם שָׁבִי סוֹסֵיכֶם (*I killed your young men with the sword along with your seized horses*) in 4:10b,

splendidly created. He also observes a chiasmic structure within the hymn with revelation to humanity at the centre, framed by the mountains and high places in the first and final clauses respectively, with the wind and the light coming in between.

²⁸⁶ Watts, *Vision and Prophecy in Amos*, 52, notices that the elaborate refrain “the LORD, the God of hosts is his name” in 4:13 closely relates to the command “be prepared to meet your God, Israel” in 4:12.

²⁸⁷ For a general understanding of the various forms and the importance of this divine epithet, see Choon L. Seow, “Hosts, Lord of,” *ABD* 3 h–j: 304–307; Siegfried Kreuzer, “Zebaoth: Der Thronende,” *VT* 56 (2006): 347–62. Máire Byrne, *The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: A Basis for Interfaith Dialogue* (London: Continuum, 2011), 32; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 65. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names*, trans. Frederick H. Cryer (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988). Benjamin Nestor Wambacq, *L'épithète Divine Jahvé Seba'ot: Étude Philologique, Historique Et Exégétique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1947).

²⁸⁸ However, the sarcastic nature of the unit 4:4a–5f implies the infliction of punishments.

הפכתי ככם כמִהִפְכַּת אֱלֹהִים אֶת־סֹדֶם וְאֶת־עֲמֹרָה (*I overturned you as God overturned Sodom and Gomorrah*) in 4:11a–b), אֶעֱשֶׂה (*I will do*) in 4:12a and 12c, and הִכּוֹן לִקְרֹאת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ (*be prepared to meet your God*) in 4:12d and 12e.

- In an attempt to win Israel back, the Lord resorted to inflicting punishments, however, each time the recurring refrain וְלֹא־שִׁבַּתְּם עָדִי (*yet you did not return to me*), is an expression of his sadness at their refusal to repent.
- The contemptible behaviour of the cows of Bashan, recorded in the first major unit, 4:1a–h, is the justification for the divine judgements seen in 4:2a–13g, the second major unit.
- The acclamation יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ (*the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name*), which contains an elaborate divine name, brings the unit to a conclusion.

5.3 TEXT-PRAGMATICS: AMOS 4:1–13

5.3.1 Communication: Cows of Bashan

The phrase וְנִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה בְּקִדְשׁוֹ (*the Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness*, 4:2a), which contains the *verbum dicendi* נִשְׁבַּע (*to swear*), introduces the direct speech in 4:2a–3d, making it clear that it is the Lord who speaks. Given the past perspective of נִשְׁבַּע (*swore*), it can be stated that the direct speech in 4:2a–3d is in the past, however, the identity of the addressee remains unclear. The text does seem to suggest that it could be the unspecified ‘you’-figure featuring prominently throughout the unit. Identification of the ‘you’-figure is hampered by inconsistencies in regard to gender, namely, the second person masculine plural suffixes עֲלֵיכֶם (4:2b) and אַתְּכֶם (4:2c), second person feminine plural suffix וְאַתְּרֵיכֶן (4:2d) and the verbs in the second person feminine plural form וְהִשְׁלַכְתֶּנָּה (4:3a) and תִּצְאֶנָּה (4:3c). It becomes necessary therefore to look backwards and forwards. 4:4a–5f, the unit immediately following, opens with the imperative בָּאוּ and takes up the theme of cultic offerings, but fails to mention any specific addressee. On the other hand the use of the vocative cows of Bashan (פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן) in the previous unit (4:1a–h) identifies them as the ‘you’-figure. Several factors support this assumption.

(i) The word alluded to in the phrase שְׁמַעוּ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה (*hear this word*) in 4:1a–h, is the one proclaimed in 4:2a–3d.

(ii) The word is narrated in the form of a divine judgement, delivered on the basis of the iniquities of the cows of Bashan, the addressees.

That is to say, the questions ‘what must be heard?’, ‘who needs to hear it?’, ‘why are they being punished?’ and ‘how will they be punished?’ and the respective answers, ‘the word,’ ‘the cows of Bashan,’ ‘for their iniquities,’ and ‘through various chastisements’ all point to the units being interconnected and provide conclusive evidence that the cows of Bashan and the ‘you’-figure are one and the same. However, with the grammatical confusion caused in 4:1a–b by the subject-verb incongruity, the identification of the cows of Bashan becomes more difficult. The vocative פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן is a subject in the feminine form, but the verb שְׁמַעוּ attached to it is in the masculine form.

The following table outlines the gender incongruities occurring in units 4:1a–h and 4:2a–3d.

4:1a	שְׁמַעוּ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה (mpl)
4:1b	פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן (fpl)
4:1d	הַעֲשׂוֹת דְּלִים (fpl)
4:1e	הַרְצָצוֹת אֲבִיּוֹנִים (fpl)
4:1f	הָאִמָּרֹת לְאֵלֵינֶיהֶם (fpl) (mpl)
4:1g	הַבִּיאָה (msg)
4:1h	וְנִשְׁתָּה (1 pl)
4:2b	כִּי הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים עָלֵיכֶם (mpl, fsg)
4:2c	וְנִשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם בְּצַנּוֹת (mpl, fsg)
4:2d	וְאֶתְרִיתְכֶן בְּסִירוֹת דּוּגָה (fpl, fsg)
4:3a	וּפְרָצִים תַּעֲאָנָה (fpl)
4:3b	אִשָּׁה גִּנְדָּה (fsg) גִּנְדָּה (fsg)
4:3c	וְהִשָּׁלַכְתֶּנָּה הַהֶרמוֹנָה (fpl)

These confusions make the task of determining the identity of the cows of Bashan all the more exacting.²⁸⁹ However, the plural ‘cows’ used in this imagery of cows of Bashan being addressed,²⁹⁰ suggests that it refers to a group of men or women or a mixture of both, rather than an individual. Further details emerge in 4:1c–h, where it is revealed that they live on the mountain of Samaria, and that they enjoy a luxurious lifestyle at the expense of the poor. These identify them as belonging to the ruling class²⁹¹ and most probably men as this was the convention at the time. Supporting this conclusion is the fact that the verb שָׁמְעוּ in 4:1a, which precedes the vocative cows of Bashan, is masculine. The probability that men are referred to here can also be explained through the sarcastic elements found in the cow-image. The prophet sarcastically uses the imagery of the cows of Bashan as a means of insulting men, who are mockingly presented as women, and even worse, by referring to them as cows, he is scornfully depicting them as being weak.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Much debate has taken place as to the correct explanation of the expression פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן. Scholars differ in their opinions. For various interpretations, see Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 86; Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 205; Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, 72; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 252; Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 105; Nwaoru, “A Fresh Look at Amos 4:1–3 and Its Imagery,” 465, 468–70.

²⁹⁰ Robert D. Miller, “Baals of Bashan,” *RB* 4 (2014): 507, who on a study based on archaeology and climatology argues that Bashan is unsuitable for raising cattle. (This contradicts the common portrayal of Bashan as a place renowned for rich pastures. For instance, Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, 72; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 421; Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 225; Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 107).

²⁹¹ Other opinions are (i) cows of Bashan are a group of wealthy women of Samaria, see Brian Irwin, “Amos 4:1 and the Cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria: A Reappraisal,” *CBQ* 74 (2012): 235–37.

The comparison of women to the cows of Bashan from a syntactic point of view: analysing the references to the cows of Bashan can help to explain how the term comes to be used to refer to women. The word פָּרוֹת (cows) is in the feminine plural form. The three verbs עֲשׂוּת, רָצְצוּ, and אָמְרוּ, in the participle plural form, describe their activities, while the term אֲדֹנֵיהֶם (lords), employed by them when giving commands, is one commonly used by women of that social class. Furthermore, the image of well-fed cattle on rich pastures is brought to mind by the expression פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן (cows of Bashan), and is a metaphor for those living in luxury. The phrase אִשָּׁה נִגְדָּה (one woman after the other), 4:3b, reaffirms the allusion to a group of wealthy women. Their fall from grace is confirmed in 4:2b–3d.

(ii) Israel as a whole: Barstad contends that פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן is a metaphor for the entire population of Israel. See Barstad, *The Religious Polemics of Amos*, 40. Wilgus suggests that the argument that פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן is a metaphor for all of the people of Israel should not be undermined, even if it directly refers to a group of wealthy women. He also says that the women of Samaria can be a figure of speech that refers to Israel as a whole if cows is used euphemetically for the women of Samaria. See Wilgus, “Judgment on Israel,” 105. Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, 71; Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 420; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 256.

²⁹² van Wieringen observes that in the ancient world it is not uncommon for men to be portrayed as females. See van Wieringen, “Feminized Men in Amos 4:1–3,” 404. Likewise, Andersen and Freedman remark that animal names such as buffalo, ram, stag, stallion, bull (šôr) for strong brave men, especially warriors, were frequently used, however, פָּרוֹת was treated as an imitation so poor as to seem a deliberate mockery. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 421.

5.3.2 Communication: The Lord–Israel

The vocative בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*sons of Israel*) occurs for the first time in 4:5e. Though the direct speech in 4:4a–5f does not have any introductory formula, the imperative בָּאָה places it in the now-moment. The divine naming יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, which is contained in the divine speech formula נְאֻם יְהוָה in 4:5f and which confirms the Lord as the speaker, is found nowhere else in 4:1–13. The inclusion of אֱלֹהֵינוּ serves to emphasise the power of the divine word and it is addressed to the sons of Israel (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). In a sarcastic manner they are directed to go to the sacred shrine of Bethel and sin (4:4a–b), and to that at Gilgal, and sin even more (4:4a–d) and also to bring with them sacrifices (4:4f), and tithes (4:4g) as well as leaven-offerings (4:5a). Though these offerings, freely given, are for their own self-gratification (4:5d), rather than to praise the Lord, it is ironic that these very acts serve only to ridicule them.²⁹³

The now-moment character of the text brings into focus the position of the text-immanent reader who, due to the absence of an introductory formula and of a specific addressee, could be considered to be the ‘you’-figure addressed in the imperative verb (בָּאָה) in 4:4a. The command to go to both Bethel and Gilgal to commit sins and also to bring sacrifices as offerings causes some confusion, however, the anxiety of the text-immanent reader is eased on his realisation that he is not the one being addressed, made clear from the use of the vocative בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. Nevertheless, this episode serves a useful purpose in that he comes to realise that when there is an absence of a corresponding regard for justice, these great ostentatious practices are devoid of any sincerity. It becomes clear that this pointless religiosity²⁹⁴ is nothing other than a challenge to the authority of the Lord.²⁹⁵ The text-immanent reader comes to understand that the message regarding justice, especially in relation to the most vulnerable members of society, is meant for him also.

Unit 4:6a–11f contains five separate yet interconnected speeches (4:6a–d, 7a–8e, 9a–d, 10a–e, and 11a–f), with structural and thematic similarities, and the fact that the Lord is the sole speaker, indicates that they should be treated as one. This is confirmed by the occurrence of the divine speech formula נְאֻם יְהוָה at the conclusion of each of the direct speeches (4:6d, 8e,

²⁹³ Möller observes it as a kind of people’s self-conceit that is deeply grounded in their religious fervour. Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 264. The addressees, sons of Israel, are astonished by the irony of the joining together of the opposites, sin and sacrifice.

²⁹⁴ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 206; Smith, *Amos*, 142.

²⁹⁵ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 206.

9d, 10e, and 11f). That all of the words spoken by the Lord are directed at Israel further verifies this, as does the vocative *יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*Israel*) in 4:12b. Nevertheless, throughout the unit Israel is addressed as a ‘you’-figure (4:6b, 6c, 7a, 8d, 9a, 9b, 9c, 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 11a, 11c, and 11e). This ‘you’-figure forms an inclusion with the addressees cows of Bashan (4:1a–h), the ‘you’-figure (4:2a–3d), sons of Israel (4:5f) and Israel (4:12b), as they also all failed to recognize or respond positively to the divine judgements. In contrast to the previous unit, 4:4a–5f, the ‘you’-figure does not appear to be active, yet, because of their stubbornness in refusing to return to the Lord *וְלֹא־שָׁבְתֶם עָדִי* (*yet you did not return to me*), neither can it be concluded that they are passive. There is a parallel here with the ruling elites who subjected the poor and needy to unspeakable oppression.

4:12a–c, though very short, is significant as it brings a conclusion to the direct speeches. Even if the speech is neither introduced by, nor concluded with a divine speech formula, it can be said with certainty that it is the Lord who speaks, a judgement supported by the first person singular usage in 4:12a and 12c and by the occurrence of the vocative *יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*Israel*) in 4:12b. In regard to the suffixes it is important to note the variances in gender, where in 4:12a the masculine (*אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ*) occurs, while in 4:12c the feminine (*אֶעֱשֶׂה־לְךָ*) is used. This inconsistency, together with the gender ambiguities in 4:1a–3d form an inclusion, and deliver an emphatic message to Israel that they are about to suffer for their rejection of the Lord’s commands.

5.3.3 Communication: The Prophet–Israel

4:12d–13g, the first unit, is notable for the change of speaker. It is evident from the absence of a divine speech formula and also from the reference to the Lord in the third person *אֱלֹהֶיךָ* (*your God*) in 4:12e, that it is not he who speaks. Since the direct speech is neither introduced by, nor concluded with a formula, but is, however, delivered in the now-moment, it would be reasonable to presume that the text-immanent author is the speaker. However, as he is here not addressing the text-immanent reader, as would normally be the case, it can be concluded that he is not in fact the speaker. Supporting the assertion that the prophet is the one who speaks, is the use of the imperative *שָׁמְעוּ* (*hear*) in 4:1a–h, and also the vocative *יִשְׂרָאֵל* in 4:12f, where Israel is specifically addressed. These factors combined leave no doubt that this assertion is indeed correct. Due to the now-moment character of the text, the

text-immanent reader seems to be identified as the ‘you’-figure in the imperative הִכּוֹן which opens the prophetic speech. The warning, הִכּוֹן לִקְרַאת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ (*be prepared to meet your God*), 4:12d–e, issued by the prophet, appears to be directed at him, but the vocative יִשְׂרָאֵל (4:12f) clarifies that Israel is the intended addressee. Recalling the repeated refrain of the Lord in 4:4a–11f, *yet you did not return to me*, the prophet delivers a stern warning to Israel to prepare well for its meeting with the Lord,²⁹⁶ a meeting which is both crucial and imminent, and which it cannot afford to ignore. The vocabulary employed powerfully conveys the feeling of urgency regarding the situation in which Israel finds itself, but also the sense of the power and majesty of the Lord. Given what has gone before, כִּין (*to prepare*) and קָרָא (*to meet*) suggest a pressing need for immediate attention to be paid to preparing for the encounter with the Lord, while יוֹצֵר הָרִים (*former of the mountains*), וּבֹרֵא רוּחַ (*creator of the wind*), וּמַגִּיד לָאָדָם (*messenger to the human being*), מַה־שֵּׁחוֹ (*what his thought is about*), עֹשֶׂה עִיפָה שָׁחַר (*the one who turns dawn to darkness*) and וְדֹרֵךְ עַל־בָּמֹתַי אֶרֶץ (*and the one who is making a path over the heights of the earth*) leave no doubt as to the Lord’s omnipotence. The use of the elaborate naming אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת יְהוָה (*the LORD, the God of hosts*) in 4:13g is particularly apt.

²⁹⁶ Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 413, 450; Aaron Schart, “The First Section of the Book of the Twelve Prophets: Hosea–Joel–Amos,” *Int* 61 (2007): 144; Joyce Rilett Wood, *Amos in Song and Book Culture*, JSOTSup 337 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 62.

5.3.4 Summary

The table below gives an overview of the communicative elements in unit 4:1–13.

unit	text-immanent author	addressee	time of speaking	message communicated
4:1a–h	prophet	‘you’-figure (cows of Bashan)	now-moment	unjust acts of cows of Bashan
4:2a–3d	prophet	‘you’-figure (cows of Bashan)	past perspective	divine oath
4:4a–5f	the Lord	‘you’-figure (sons of Israel) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	sarcastic invitation to sin
4:6a–d 4:7a–8e 4:9a–d 4:10a–e 4:11a–f	the Lord	‘you’-figure (Israel)	past perspective	judgements and resistance
4:12a–c	the Lord (‘I’-figure)	‘you’-figure (Israel)	now-moment	encounter with the Lord
4:12d–13g	prophet	‘you’-figure (Israel)	now-moment	omnipotence of the Lord

- The first to be addressed by the prophet are the cows of Bashan (4:1a–h), whose identification is complicated by the subject-verb incongruity, where a feminine plural noun occurs with a masculine plural verb. However, the information provided in 4:1c–h confirms them to be the ruling class of Samaria.
- An oath sworn by the Lord is delivered by the prophet in 4:2a–3d. Through the gender incongruity seen in the first unit and continued here, the addressee found in the form of a ‘you’-figure is identified as the cows of Bashan, who will face the consequences of their actions.

- In 4:4a–5f the sons of Israel (the addressees) are invited by the Lord to go to Bethel and Gilgal to commit sins and to make their empty offerings which have more to do with their own pleasure than with worshipping God. The message regarding justice is also meant for the text-immanent reader.
- The Lord is the speaker in 4:6a–d, 7a–8e, 9a–d, 10a–e and 11a–f. He confronts Israel (the addressee) for its unjust behaviour, reminding it of past punishments. However, Israel remains stubborn and unrepentant. The Lord’s response comes in 4:12a–c.
- The prophet’s address to Israel in 4:12d–13g, the final unit, leaves no room for complacency regarding its proposed encounter with the Lord. It is left in no doubt as to the power of the Lord, and a negative response on its part would have grave implications.
- Apart from units 4:1a–h and 4:12d–13g, where the prophet speaks directly to the cows of Bashan and Israel respectively, all other units attest the presence of the text-immanent author as he reads the words of the Lord. Even though he does not actually address anyone, he is fully conscious of the importance of what the Lord had to say. Despite past interventions by the Lord, such as slaughter, exile, famine, drought, and pestilence, Israel refused to repent and return to him. Realising the seriousness of the situation, the text-immanent author anxiously awaits the reaction of the Lord.
- The position of the text-immanent reader, who witnesses the situation from the beginning, is not insignificant. Due to the now-moment character of 4:1a, it appears that he may be the one being addressed. However, his fears are allayed on discovering that the cows of Bashan, and not he, are the ones threatened with exile. Likewise, witnessing the ridiculing of Israel over its religiosity and unjust behaviour (4:4a–5f), though not directly addressed, he becomes aware that he too must guard against any involvement in such conduct, something affirmed by the divine judgement in 4:6a–11f and the resolve of the Lord in 4:12a–c. Given the stubbornness of Israel, he could easily understand the need for punishments, and also the urgency regarding an encounter between Israel and the Lord.

5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this section I intend to examine the role of the Lord, with each unit being treated separately. To do this a number of questions need to be addressed, namely, ‘where is the

Lord located,’ ‘how is he addressed,’ ‘what divine speech formulas are used,’ and ‘how do these explain the function of the Lord.’

The following table lists the divine names, the speech formulas and the actions of the Lord.

divine naming	אֱלֹהֵיךָ (4:11), אֱלֹהִים (4:3, 6, 8, 9, 11), אֱדֹנֵי יְהוָה (4:2, 5), יְהוָה (4:3, 6, 8, 9, 11), יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת (4:12), יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת (4:13)
divine speech formula	נֹאֵם אֱדֹנֵי, נֹאֵם־יְהוָה (4:3, 6, 8, 9, 11), נֹאֵם־יְהוָה (4:2), נֹשָׁבַע אֱדֹנֵי יְהוָה בְּקֹדְשׁוֹ (4:2), יְהוָה (4:5)
divine actions	וְגַם אֲנֹכִי מְנַעַתִּי מִכֶּם אֶת־הַגֶּשֶׁם (4:6), וְגַם־אֲנִי נִתְתִּי לָכֶם (4:7), הִרְגָתִי (4:10), שְׁלַחְתָּ (4:9), הִכִּיתִי (4:7), לֹא אֶמְתִּיר (4:7), וְהִמְתַּרְתִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה (4:11), הִפַּכְתִּי (4:10), נֹאֵם־יְהוָה (4:10), וְאֶעֱלֶה (4:10), אֶעֱשֶׂה (4:12), יוֹצֵר (4:13), וּבִרָא (4:13), וַיִּמְגֵּד (4:13), וְיִדְרֹךְ (4:13), עֲשֵׂה (4:13), מִה־שָׁחוֹ (4:13)

The Lord appears for the first time in 4:2a–3d. Attention is drawn to the divine naming, אֱדֹנֵי יְהוָה in 4:2a and יְהוָה in 4:3d, the first being more elaborate. Then the $\text{הָנָה} + \text{כִּי}$ construction gives added intensity to the act of swearing an oath, נֹשָׁבַע אֱדֹנֵי יְהוָה בְּקֹדְשׁוֹ (*the Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness*) in 4:2a. The mentioning of the days that are about to come upon them, brings with it a certain ominous tone, suggesting that no good will come with them. This depressing scenario is realised with the images of people being lifted by hooks and fish-hooks (4:2c–d) and being exiled (4:3). This is the Lord’s verdict on the iniquities alluded to in 4:1a–h. Significantly, the direct speech in the unit is introduced by and concludes with divine speech formulas, though the divine warnings differ with אֱדֹנֵי יְהוָה used in the introduction and יְהוָה appearing in the conclusion. The longer divine naming, אֱדֹנֵי יְהוָה, gives added emphasis to the oath sworn by the Lord.

The Lord appears for the second time in 4:4a–5f. The plot developed by the Lord and the speech delivered by him, skilfully exposes, by means of irony, the folly of engaging in empty religious practices. Bringing together two contradictory themes, namely, sin and sacrifice, the Lord makes no secret of his abhorrence of these acts. While those involved

engage in unjust activities, there is however a creative purpose attached. A return to the Lord is the desired outcome.

The next five units (4:6a–11f) are a litany of inflictions, all with the same redemptive purpose. Apart from the divine speech formulas, the divine interventions, in most cases, are marked by the first person usage, this emphasising the involvement of the Lord.²⁹⁷ This can be seen in: וְגַם-אֲנִי נִתְּתִי לָכֶם (4:6a), וְגַם אֲנֹכִי מְנַעַתִּי מִכֶּם אֶת-הַגֶּשֶׁם (4:7a), וְהִמְתַּרְתִּי (4:7b), לֹא אֶמְתִּיר (4:7c), הִכִּיתִי (4:9a), שָׁלַחְתָּ (4:10a), הִרְגֵּתִי (4:10b), וְאַעֲלֶה (4:10c) and הִפְכֵּתִי (4:11a). Though the punishments become increasingly severe, the intention of the Lord remains constant, attested by the repeated divine statement וְלֹא-שָׁבַתְּם עָדִי (*yet you did not return to me*).²⁹⁸ However, the continued refusal by Israel to repent results in the Lord declaring, לָכֵן כֹּה אֶעֱשֶׂה-לָּךְ (*therefore, I will do to you thus*), 4:12a–c. This expression, arising as a consequence of Israel's past sins, takes on a profound meaning in light of the recurring phrase. Having been ignored so often by Israel, the Lord's determination to resolve this ongoing situation leads to this climatic decision.²⁹⁹

In the final unit 4:12d–13g, the prophet announces the supremely important decision that Israel must prepare to meet its God, with the tone of the announcement clearly indicating that it should not be ignored. Indeed, this decision of the Lord could be considered to be one final ominous warning³⁰⁰ to Israel as further failures to respond positively are not an option. It is appropriate, therefore, to contrast the actions of the speaker (the Lord) with those of the addressee (Israel) as they occur in the pericope. Firstly, the cows of Bashan oppressed the poor (4:1d–h), and the Lord swore judgement against them in his holiness (4:2a–3d). Secondly, the sons of Israel were invited to undertake various religious activities (4:4a–5f). However, these were rejected by the Lord and punishments ensued. On account of their failure to heed the warnings and to return to the Lord (4:6a–11f), they must now encounter him (4:12a–c, 12d–13g). A number of factors point to the significance of the meeting. First, the critical nature of the meeting is emphasised by the use of the verbs הִכּוֹן (*be prepared*)

²⁹⁷ Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 206.

²⁹⁸ As Andersen and Freedman observe, the critical juncture in regard to judgement has been arrived at, because of Israel's refusal to repent and return to the Lord. Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 450.

²⁹⁹ Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 413.

³⁰⁰ Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 413.

and לִקְרֹא (to meet). Being unprepared would be the height of foolishness, and the command of the prophet must not be ignored under any circumstances. Secondly, in the context of this solemn warning, attention focuses on the divine naming, from יְהוָה (4:12e) and finally אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת (4:13g). This naming which includes a Tetragrammaton (יְהוָה) and also the expression God of hosts (אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת) brings the unit to a fitting climax.

The many titles given to the Lord in 4:13a–g merit close scrutiny.

Firstly, in 4:13a–b the Lord is depicted as the one who forms mountains יוֹצֵר הָרִים (4:13a) and creates the wind, וּבֹרֵא רוּחַ (4:13b). The verbs יָצַר (to form)³⁰¹ and בָּרָא (to create)³⁰² attest the creative power of the Lord. A parallelism exists between הָרִים and רוּחַ. Mountains are visible realities, whereas, the wind is an invisible reality, inferring that the Lord is the creator of both realities, in other words, a totality.³⁰³ The Lord creates all things, visible and invisible, with the titles referred to, creating a sense of awe for his magnificence. In addition, the words הָרִים and רוּחַ form a thematic connection with unit 4:1a–h, where הָר occurs in 4:1c. As the Lord forms mountains, immovable objects, the implication is that he creates things that are both strong and stable. In contrast, the cows of Bashan, who live on the mountain of Samaria, do not possess such qualities. Instead of offering comfort and protection to the poorest and weakest, they do quite the opposite, harshly oppressing them, with chaos abounding. The word רוּחַ in 4:13b and unit 4:1a–h are connected semantically so that the former is linked to the verb הָאֲמַרְתָּ in 4:1f, through the communication word field. The communication from the Lord (4:13b) is revealed to be real and genuine, whereas that from the cows of Bashan (4:1f–h) is exposed as being shallow and self-serving. The portrayal of the Lord is, in effect, a challenge to Israel to accept responsibility for its iniquities and to repent.

Secondly, the Lord is depicted as one who reveals his thoughts to mankind, וּמְגִיד לְאָדָם (4:13c–d). The *hiphil*-form of the participle נִגַּד (to declare) underlines the role played by the prophet, and it is he who delivers the direct speech, with the expression מִה־שֹׁחַר

³⁰¹ A. H. Konkel, “יצר,” *NIDOTTE* 2:503–506. The psalmist, in relation to the forming of the mountains (Ps 65:6), the dry land (Ps 95:5), and the creation of Leviathan (Ps 104:26), employs this term widely. Cf. also Gen 2:7–8 for the creation of man and the animals and Prov 8:25 for the forming of the mountains.

³⁰² Cf. Gen 1:1–2:3.

³⁰³ Wilhelm Rudolph, “Amos 4,6–13,” in *Wort – Gebot – Glaube: Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments: Walther Eichrodt zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Walther Eichrodt et al., ATANT 59 (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1970), 36.

(4:13d) arousing curiosity as to know what the thoughts of the Lord are. The statement in 3:7 *the Lord GOD does not make a word, if he did not reveal his confidential talk to his servants, the prophets* serves to enhance the role of the prophet. The reluctance on the part of Israel to comply with the Lord's commands portrays it as being hostile, not only to accepting the messages, but also towards the messenger himself.

The one who turns the dawn to darkness, the next appellation bestowed on the Lord, introduces a negative tone to the text, as the act alluded to contradicts the act of creation.³⁰⁴ This is very much at variance with the laws of nature, and the very thought that the Lord would even consider such action underlines the severity of the punishment.³⁰⁵ A sense of hopelessness enters the situation regarding Israel, with the darkness not only symbolising, but also heightening the level of danger inherent in the divine judgement.³⁰⁶ This in turn leads to a growing belief that the encounter between the Lord and Israel could end in failure, with dire consequences for the people.

Finally, the expression *וְדָרָה עַל־בָּמְתֵי אֶרֶץ* (*and the one who makes himself a path over the heights of the earth*) in 4:13f forms an inclusion with the title *יוֹצֵר הָרִים* in 4:13a. However, this title also introduces a judgement tone, and in doing so creates the image of an all-conquering figure.³⁰⁷ In brief, all these splendid images of the Lord in 4:13a–f signify the importance and grave consequences of the encounter with the Lord for which Israel must be prepared. Worthy of particular mention is the unique and elaborate divine naming *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת* in 4:13f, conveying as it does the great power and glory of the Lord, a fitting climax to the unit.

³⁰⁴ Carny observes that the upending of the laws of nature results in complete ruin. Pin'has Carny, "Doxologies – A Scientific Myth," *HS* 18 (1977): 155–56; Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 286.

³⁰⁵ Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 288.

³⁰⁶ Möller is of the opinion that they probably would not have imagined him as the one who changes the dawn into darkness. Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 287.

³⁰⁷ Möller, *A Prophet in Debate*, 288.

The previous expressions associated with the role and naming of the Lord in 4:1–13, are presented in the diagram below.

<p>נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ (4:2)</p> <p><u>The furious Lord</u> who swears an oath and declares punishment</p>	<p>נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה (4:3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11)</p> <p><u>A divine voice</u> this repeated divine speech formula is emphatic and heightens the value of the divine discourses</p>	<p>כִּי כֵן אֶהְיֶה (4:5)</p> <p><u>The Lord who judges</u> by means of irony, the Lord God makes it known that sacrificial offerings without just acts are defilements and profanities</p>
<p>וְגַם־אֲנִי נֹתֵתִי לָכֶם (4:6), וְגַם אֲנֹכִי מְנַעֲתִי מִכֶּם אֶת־הַגֶּשֶׁם (4:7), וְהַמִּתְרַתִּי (4:7), לֹא אֶמְתִּיר (4:7), הַכִּיתִי (4:10), שְׁלַחַת (4:10), הֲרַגְתִּי (4:10), וְאַעֲלֶה (4:11) הַפֶּכֶתִי (4:11)</p> <p><u>The Lord who judges</u> a series of calamities sent by the Lord on Israel</p>	<p>יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ (4:13)</p> <p><u>The Lord, the God of hosts</u> this awesome divine naming with its solemn elaboration serves to mark the climax of the confrontation with the Lord</p> <p>וְלֹא־שִׁבְתֶּם עָדִי (4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11)</p> <p><u>A lamenting Lord</u> the recurring phrase expresses the sorrow of the Lord at Israel's refusal to return to him</p>	<p>הִכּוּ לְקִרְאֹת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ (4:12–13)</p> <p><u>The Lord who confronts</u> who is the former of the mountains, the creator of the wind, the messenger to the human beings, what his thoughts are, the one who makes the dawn into darkness, the one who makes himself a path over the heights of the earth</p>

CHAPTER SIX

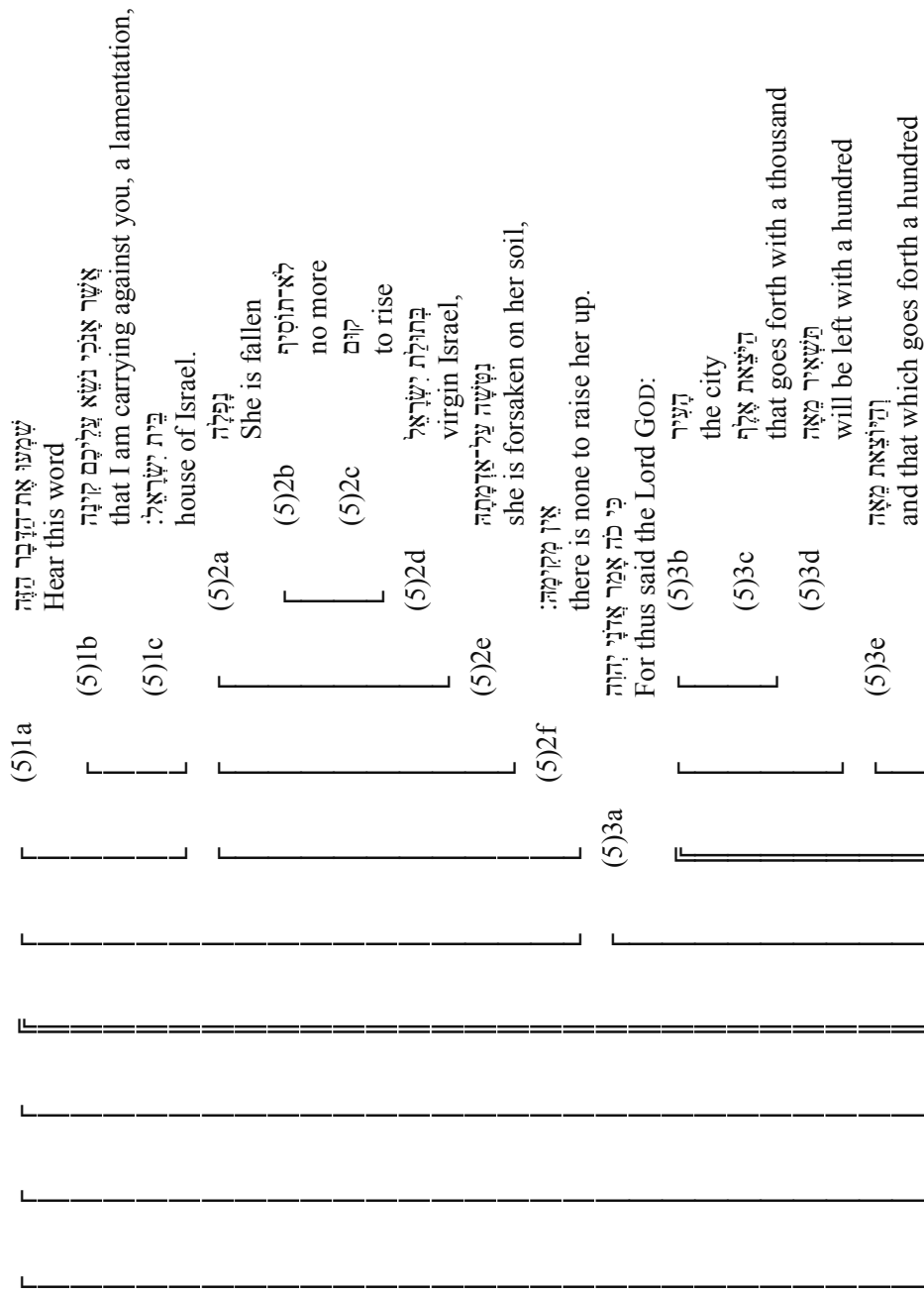
AMOS 5:1–6:14

BESET BY LAMENTATIONS AND WOES

For I knew your transgressions were many and your sins were numerous (5:12a–c). You have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood (6:12c–d). Hear this word that I am carrying against you a lamentation (5:1a–b). Said the LORD, God of hosts is his name (5:27b–c). The encounter between the Lord and Israel follows on from that in chapter four where Israel is repeatedly reminded of its wrongdoings (5:7a–b, 10a–d, 11b–c, 12d–f; 6:4a–c, 6a–b and 14a–15c). Though much emphasis is placed on doom and impending disaster, Israel is not left without hope. It hears a number of exhortations conveying a message that not all would be lost if they were prepared to return to the Lord (5:4a–c, 6a–b, 14a–15c). By seeking the Lord, and by seeking good and not evil, they could survive. However, the prophet is duty bound to inform Israel of the consequences of any failure to respond positively to these exhortations. He does this by detailing the great powers that the Lord possesses (5:8a–9b). He reminds them that the Lord is the creator of all things, and that he can turn darkness to light and day into night. In effect, they are being told that there will be no escape if they reject the Lord's commands. He treats with contempt the empty sacrifices offered by those who are, at the same time, engaged in oppressing the poor and denying them their rights. Justice and righteousness must go hand in hand with those offerings. *May justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (5:24a–b).* Yet, despite the best efforts of the prophet, Israel stubbornly refuses to heed the Lord's commands, resulting in two warnings of widespread destruction and much mourning (5:1a–3f and 16a–17c). Also, the day of the Lord will bring only sorrow and not the expected joy (5:18a–20d). Those feeling safe will be left exposed (6:1a–2f) and many will be exiled (5:27a and 6:7b–c). The Lord himself swears an oath declaring severe punishment (6:8a–e) and invasion by a foreign nation (6:14a–f), a sad climax to chapter six.

6.1 TEXT-SYNTAX: AMOS 5:1–6:14

6.1.1 Diagram



				(5)3f	מִשְׁאִיר עֲשֶׂה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל: will be left with ten, for the house of Israel.
				(5)4a	כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל: For thus said the LORD to the house of Israel:
				(5)4b	דְּרִישׁוּנִי seek me
				(5)4c	וְחִיּוּ: and live!
				(5)5a	וְאַל תִּדְרֹשׁ בֵּית־אֵל But do not seek Bethel,
				(5)5b	וְהִגְלָל לֹא תֵבֹא and do not enter into Gilgal,
				(5)5c	וּבִבְאֵר שָׁבַע לֹא תַעֲבֹד and do not pass over to Beersheba.
				(5)5d	כִּי הִגְלָל גָּלוּל יִגְלָה For Gilgal certainly goes into exile
				(5)5e	וּבֵית־אֵל יִהְיֶה לְאֵזֶן: and Bethel will come to nothing.
				(5)6a	דְּרִשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה Seek the LORD
				(5)6b	וְחִיּוּ and live!
				(5)6c	כִּלְי־יִצְחָר בְּאֵשׁ בֵּית יוֹסֵף lest he will break out like fire upon the house of Joseph.
				(5)6d	וְאֶכְלָה It will devour
				(5)6e	וְאִין מְכַבֶּה לְבֵית־אֵל: there will be no one to quench [it] for Bethel.
				(5)7a	הֵהָפְכִים לְעֵנֶה מִשְׁפָּט You who are turning justice to wormwood
				(5)7b	וְאָדָקְהָ לְאַרְצֵן הַנִּיחֹחַ: and put righteousness to the ground.
					עֲשֹׂה כִימָה וּכְסִיל (5)8a

		He is the one who makes the Pleiades and Orion, (5)8b and turns darkness into morning, (5)8c and darkens day into night, (5)8d he who calls for the waters of the sea (5)8e and thereupon poured them out upon the face of the earth, יהוה שמו: the LORD is his name. (5)8f הַמַּבְרִיט שֶׁד עַל-עֵץ (5)9a He who causes destruction on the strong (5)9b וְשֶׁד עַל-מִבְצָר יָבוֹא: and destruction comes on the fortress. (5)10a שָׂנְאוּ They hated (5)10b בְּשַׁעַר מוֹכִיחַ who reproves in the gate (5)10c וְלִבָּר תָּמִים יִתְעַבּוּ and who speaks uprightly (5)10d יִתְעַבּוּ: they abhor. (5)11a לָכֵן Therefore, (5)11b יַעַן בּוֹשָׁטְכֶם עַל-דָּל because you impose taxes on the poor one (5)11c וּמִשְׁאַחַת-כֶּרֶת תִּקְחוּ מִגִּבּוֹ and take from him tribute of wheat: (5)11d כִּתְּתִי גִזִּית בְּנֵי תֶחֱם you have built houses of hewn stone (5)11e לֹא-תִשְׁבּוּ בָּם
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				(5)11f	L [but you will not dwell in them; כְּרִמֵי-הַמָּדוּ וְנִשְׁעָם you have planted pleasant vineyards רֶלֶא תִשְׂתּוּ אֶת-יַיִן: but you will not drink their wine.
			(5)12a	[כִּי יָדַעְתִּי For I knew	
			(5)12b	[רַבִּים פְּשָׁעֵיךָ your transgressions were many	
			(5)12c	[וְצֻלְמֵי הַטֹּאתֶיךָ and your sins were numerous,	
			(5)12d	[צֹרֵר צָדִיק you who are afflicting the just,	
			(5)12e	[לִקְחֵי כֶסֶף taking bribe	
			(5)12f	[וְאַבְיוֹנִים בַּשַּׁעַר הַטּוֹ: and turn aside the poor in the gate.	
			(5)13a	[לָכֵן Therefore,	
			(5)13b	[הַפֶּשֶׁטְכִּיל בָּעֵת הַזֹּאת יָדָם the prudent keeps quiet in such a time	
			(5)13c	[כִּי עַת רָעָה הִיא: for it is an evil time.	
				[(5)14a דְּרֹשׁ טוֹב Seek good	
				[(5)14b וְאַל-רָע and not evil	
				[(5)14c לְמַעַן תֵּחִיֹּו so that you may live,	
				[(5)14d וַיְהִי-כֵן and that it may be thus,	
			(5)14e	[יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ-צִבְאוֹת אֲתֶיכֶם the LORD, the God of hosts, be with you	

		(5)14f	בְּאִשֶּׁר אָמַרְתָּם: as you have said.
		(5)15a	שְׂנֵאוֹי־רָע Hate evil
		(5)15b	וְאֶהְבֵּוּ טוֹב and love good
		(5)15c	וְהִצִּיגוּ בְשַׁעַר מִשְׁפָּט and establish justice in the gate!
	(5)15d		אֲלֵי יְהוָה יִתְּנוּ אֱלֹהֵי־צִבְאוֹת שְׁאוּרֵי יוֹסֵף: Perhaps the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.
	(5)16a		לֵבִן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צִבְאוֹת אֲדֹנָי Therefore, thus said the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord:
		(5)16b	בְּכָל־חֲכוֹבוֹת מִסְפָּד there is wailing in all places
		(5)16c	וּבְכָל־חוֹצוֹת יֹאמְרוּ and they may say in all streets:
		(5)16d	הוֹי־הוֹי alas! alas!
		(5)16e	וְקָרְאוּ אֶכֶר אֶל־אֲבָל after they called the farmer to mourning
		(5)16f	וּמִסְפָּד אֶל־יְיֹדְעֵי נֹהֵי: and a wailing to those who know lamentation.
		(5)17a	וּבְכָל־גַּרְמִים מִסְפָּד In all vineyards there is lamentation,
		(5)17b	כִּי־אֶעְבֹּר בְּקִנְיָנְךָ for I pass through your midst,
	(5)17c		אָמַר יְהוָה: said the LORD.
		(5)18a	הוֹי Alas!
		(5)18b	הַמְתַּאֲוִים אֶת־יְיֹם יְהוָה who desire the day of the LORD.
		(5)18c	לְמַה־יִּהְיֶה לָּכֶם יוֹם יְהוָה

What does the day of the LORD mean for you?

(5)18d

הַיּוֹם-הַזֶּה

It is darkness

(5)18e

וְלֹא-אֹר:

and not light,

(5)19a

כַּאֲשֶׁר יָנוּס אִישׁ מִפְּנֵי הָאֵרִי

like a man who flees from the face of a lion,

(5)19b

וַיִּקְנֹעַ הָיִב

only to be confronted by a bear;

(5)19c

וְכָא הִבִּית

and then he will enter the house

(5)19d

וְסָבֵךְ יָדוֹ עַל-הַקִּיר

and he will lean his hand on the wall

(5)19e

וַיִּשְׁכוּ הַנָּחָשׁ:

and a serpent will bite him.

(5)20a

הֲלֹא-הַזֶּה יוֹם יְהוָה

Will not the day of the LORD be darkness,

(5)20b

וְלֹא-אֹר

and not light,

(5)20c

וְאֶפֶל

even dark,

(5)20d

וְלֹא-נֹגַהּ לוֹ:

and no brightness in it?

(5)21a

שָׂנְאֹתִי

I have hated,

(5)21b

מֵאֲסַתִּי מִגִּידֶיכֶם

I have despised your feasts,

(5)21c

וְלֹא אֲרִיחַ בַּעֲצֻרְתֵּיכֶם:

and I will not enjoy the smell of your assemblies.

(5)22a

כִּי אִם-תַּעֲלִילֵי עֹלוֹת וּמִזְבְּחֵיכֶם

For if you bring me burnt offerings and your gifts,

(5)22b

לֹא אֲרַצָּה

I will not please.

		(5)22c	וְשָׁלֹם מְרִיאִים לֹא אֶבִּיט: I will not even look at your peace-offering of fatlings.
		(5)23a	הָסֵר מִצְעָלִי גְמוּלָה שְׂרָדָה Take away from me the tumult of your songs,
		(5)23b	וְזָמְרַת נְבִלָדָה לֹא אֲשָׁמַע: and I will not give ear to the melody of your harp.
		(5)24a	וְגֵל כַּמַּיִם מִשְׁפֹּט May justice roll down like waters
		(5)24b	וַיִּזְדָּקָה כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן: and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
		(5)25a	הֲבִיחִים וּמִנְחָה הַגִּשְׁתֶּם-לִי בַמִּדְבָּר אֲרָבָעִים שָׁנָה Did you bring me sacrifices and offering for forty years in the wilderness,
		(5)25b	בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: house of Israel?
		(5)26a	וַיִּשְׁאָתֶם אֶת סִכּוֹת מַלְכְּכֶם וְאֶת כִּיּוֹן צִלְמֵיכֶם כּוֹכַב אֱלֹהֵיכֶם You carried Sakkuth your king and Kaiwan your images, star of your gods
		(5)26b	אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם: which you made for yourselves.
		(5)27a	וְהִגַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִהֶלֶאָה לְדַמְשֶׁק I will take you into exile beyond Damascus
		(5)27b	אָמַר יְהוָה said the LORD
		(5)27c	אֱלֹהֵי-יִצְחָקוֹת שְׁמוֹ: God of hosts is his name.
		(6)1a	הוֹי Alas!
		(6)1b	הַשְׁאֲבִימִים בְּצִיּוֹן those who are at ease in Zion
		(6)1c	וְהַבֹּטְחִים בְּהָר שְׁמַרְיוֹן גִּבְרֵי רֵאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם and those who are trusting in the mountain of Samaria

					designates of the first of the nation וְבָאוּ לָקֵחַ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: and to them came the house of Israel.
(6)1d					עָבְרוּ כַלְנֶה Pass over Calneh
(6)2a					וַיֵּרְאוּ and see
(6)2b					וַיֵּלְכוּ מִשָּׁם הַמָּת רַבָּה and go from there Hamath the great,
(6)2c					וַיֵּרְדּוּ גַת-פִּלִּשְׁתִּים and go down to Gath, Philistines.
(6)2d					
(6)2e					הֲטוֹבִים מִן-הַמְּמַלְכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה Are they better than these kingdoms?
(6)2f					אִם-יָרֵב גְּבוּלָם מִגְּבולָם: Or their borders greater than your borders?
(6)3a					הֲמַנְדִּים לְיוֹם רָע They who expel to the bad day
(6)3b					וַתָּבִישׁוּן שֶׁקֶת הַמָּטָ: and brought near a seat of violence.
(6)4a					הַשֹּׁכְבִים עַל-מִטּוֹת שֵׁן וְסִרְחִים עַל-עֲרֻשֹׁתָם Who lie upon ivory couches and sprawl upon their couches,
(6)4b					וְאֹכְלִים כְּרִים מִצֹּאן וְעֹגְלִים מִתּוֹךְ הַכֶּבֶד: and eating young lambs out of the flock and the calves from the midst of the stall;
(6)5a					הַפֹּתְטִים עַל-יָפִי הַתָּבֵל who improvise music on the mouth of the harp
(6)5b					כְּדוֹד תִּשְׁבּוּ לָקֵחַ כְּלִישִׁיר: like David valued instruments of song to them;
(6)6a					הַשֹּׁתִים בְּמִזְרְקֵי יַיִן who drink bowls of wine
(6)6b					וְרֹאשֵׁי שְׂמָנִים יִמָּשְׁחוּ and anoint with the best of oils,

					וְלֹא נִחַזְלוּ עַל־יִשְׁכְּר יוֹסֵף: but they are not grieved for the crushing of Joseph.
(6)6c					לָבוֹ Therefore,
(6)7a					עַתָּה יֵגְלוּ, בְּרֹאשׁ גָּלִי now they go into exile with the first exiles
		(6)7b			וְסָר מִן־זֶה סְרוּחָם: and a sprawling cultic feast will turn aside.
		(6)7c			
(6)8a					נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה בְּגִבֹּשׁוֹ The Lord GOD has sworn in his soul
(6)8b					נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת utterance of the LORD, God of hosts
		(6)8c			קִטְאָב אֲנֹכִי אֶת־יָצְאוֹן יַעֲקֹב, I abhor the pride of Jacob,
				(6)8d	וְאֶרְמָנִתִּי שָׁנֵאתִי and I hated his palace,
				(6)8e	וְהִסְכַּרְתִּי עֵיר וּמִלְאָהּ: and I will deliver up the city and all it contains.
				(6)9a	וְהָיָה It will be
				(6)9b	אִם־יִהְיוּ עֹשֵׂה אֲנָשִׁים בָּבֵית אָחִי if there remain ten men in one house,
				(6)9c	נָתַתִּי: they will die.
				(6)10a	וְנִשְׁאֹן דֹּדוֹ His uncle will lift him up
				(6)10b	וּנְקָרְפוֹ and he burns him
				(6)10c	לְהוֹצִיא עֲצָמִים מִן־הַבַּיִת to bring out the bones out of the house
				(6)10d	וְאָמַר and he will say
				(6)10e	לֹא־אִשָּׁר בֵּין־רַקְתֵּי הַבַּיִת []

[illegible]

did we not capture Karnaïm for ourselves
by our own strength?
כִּי הָנַנִי מְקַיִם עֲלֵיכֶם
For, behold, I am going to raise up against you
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
house of Israel,
נְאֻמ־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְבָּאוֹת
utterance of the LORD, the God of hosts
גּוֹי
a nation
וְלָקְחוּ אֹתְכֶם
and they shall afflict you
מִלְכוּת חַמַּת עַד־נִחַל הָעֶזְרָקָה:
from the entering in of Hamath unto the torrent valley of Arabah.

6.1.2 Analysis

Amos 5:1–6:14 has the following divisions.

minor units	bigger units	major units
5:1a–3f	5:1a–5e	5:1a–17c
5:4a–5e		
5:6a–11g	5:6a–13c	
5:12a–c		
5:12d–13c		
5:14a–15d	5:14a–17c	
5:16a–17c		
5:18a–20d	5:18a–6:2f	5:18a–6:14f
5:21a–27c		
6:1a–2f		
6:3a–7c	6:3a–8e	
6:8a–e		
6:9a–10k	6:9a–14f	
6:11a–12d		
6:13a–c		
6:14a–f		

(1) The imperative verbal form שְׁמַעוּ opens the direct speech at the beginning of 5:1a–3f, the first minor unit. The presence of both the ‘I’-figure (אֲנִי) and the ‘you’-figure (עַלְיֵיכֶם) signal a continuation of the direct speech, in which the ‘I’-figure announces a lamentation on which he elaborates in 5:2a–f. Immediately following in 5:3a–f, is an embedded direct speech of the Lord, which is introduced by the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר, which in turn is contained in the expression כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (*for thus said the Lord GOD*). This *qatal* clause is significant as it includes the important syntactic marker כִּי, which refers back to 5:1a–2f where the situation of the virgin Israel is portrayed thus: נָפְלָה (she is fallen, 5:2a), נִטְשָׁה (she is forsaken on her soil, 5:2e) and אֵין מְקִימָהּ (there is none to raise her up, 5:2f). Together these clauses add poignancy to the direct speech. The words of the Lord, for which

the divine speech formula *כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* acts as a solemn introduction, are recorded in 5:3b–f.

(2) The speech of the Lord continues in 5:4a–5e. However, this is a new direct speech and not part of the direct speech in 5:1a–3f where a lamentation begins and ends. It is directed at the house of Israel, this being confirmed by the occurrence of the introductory speech formula *כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*for thus said the LORD to the house of Israel*) in 5:4a. Nevertheless, units 5:1a–3f and 5:4–5e are not totally independent of one another. The conjunction *כִּי*, adverb *כֹּה* and the similar direct speech formula in 5:3a and 5:4a are indicators of the connection between the units. The present unit consists of the two imperative forms *דְּרִשׁוּנִי* (*seek me*) and *וְחִיּוּ* (*and live*) in 5:4a–b, as well as a number of *yiqtol*-forms, namely, *אַל-תִּדְרֹשׁוּ* (*do not seek*), *לֹא תֵבֵאוּ* (*do not enter*), *לֹא תַעֲבֹרוּ* (*do not pass over*), *יֵגֶלֶה* (*goes*) and *הֵיחָה* (*becomes*) in 5:5a–e, the first three of which are in the negative form, indicating some prohibitions. The remaining two *yiqtol*-forms, which are preceded by *כִּי* provide the explanation for the imposition of the prohibitions.³⁰⁸ The use of the imperative form of the verb with the first person suffix *דְּרִשׁוּנִי* (*seek me*), representing the Lord, adds emphasis to the direct speech, where the directives of the Lord are delivered in an emphatic manner in the *yiqtol* clauses.

(3) Unit 5:6a–11g, incorporating the subunits 5:6a–7b, 8a–9b and 10a–11g, contains another new direct speech. Syntactic differences between this and the previous unit include:

- (a) The absence of an introductory divine formula.
- (b) The Lord is not the subject in this unit. Appearing after a direct object marker, he is presented in a third person form. Hence, it can be concluded that he is not the speaker.
- (c) The unit opens with an asyndetic clause.

The two imperative verbal forms *דְּרִשׁוּ* (*seek*) in 5:6a and *וְחִיּוּ* (*live*) in 5:6b express a command, with the *yiqtol* clause that immediately follows *כִּי יִצְלַח כְּאֵשׁ בֵּית יוֹסֵף* (*lest he will break out like fire upon the house of Joseph*) in 5:6c, revealing the purpose of the command. The telic particle *כִּי* at the start of the clause indicates that there is a negative aspect to the

³⁰⁸ The particle *כִּי* introduces a causal clause in 5:5d and 5e that provide a reason for the preceding instructions in 5b and 5a. See Wilhelm Gesenius, Emil Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 492; Bruce K. Waltke and Michael O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 640.

purpose.³⁰⁹ It is interesting, also, to observe the comparison between the verb *וַיִּצְלַח* and the objective noun *שָׁחַ*,³¹⁰ brought about by the particle preposition *בְּ* in this clause. With the third person masculine singular form being attached to the *yiqtol*-form it is evident that the Lord is the subject of the verb. Israel is warned in the purpose clause that the Lord will break out like fire³¹¹ and cause a mighty conflagration, the severity of which is reflected in clauses *וַיִּאָכְלָהּ* (*it will devour*, 5:6d) and *וְאֵין-מִכְבֵּה לְבֵית-אֵל* (*there will be no one to quench [it] for Bethel*, 5:6e).

With the change in pronoun form from the third person singular in 5:7a to the third person plural in 5:7b, it appears that the direct speech which began in 5:6a, ends in 5:6e. However, as 5:8a–9b is a unit containing various descriptions of the Lord, it marks a continuation of the divine speech. Here too, in 5:8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 8f and 9a, the Lord appears in the third person masculine singular form, with the actions of the Lord being prominent. The asyndetic clause *יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ* (*the LORD is his name*) in 8:f, stands out from the others and brings to a climax the descriptions of the Lord.

A change in the pronoun form similar to that which occurred in 5:7a–b, is to be found in 5:10a–d, once again, however, without interruption to the direct speech. The ‘you’-figure in 5:11b, 11d, 11e and 11g, and the ‘you’-figure in 5:6a are one and the same. In addition, the presence of the particle *לִכֵּן* in 5:11a indicates the connection with the preceding unit, with 5:11a–g bringing a conclusion to what is described in 5:10a–d.

(4) The presence of the first person singular pronoun *יָדַעְתִּי* (*I knew*) in 5:12a, and the second person plural suffixes *פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם* (*your transgressions*) in 5:12b and *חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם* (*your sins*) in 5:12c, distinguish the direct speech in 5:12a–c from that in the previous unit. Even though the second person plural is found in both units, another significant distinguishing feature is the use of the first person singular suffix to denote the Lord, whereas in 5:6a–11g, he was presented in the third person form.³¹²

(5) The absence of the ‘I’-figure form in 5:12d–13c indicates that this is yet another new direct speech. A third person masculine form is used in 5:12d–f, with 5:13a–c bringing the

³⁰⁹ Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 511.

³¹⁰ Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 202–203.

³¹¹ Though the theme of fire is found elsewhere in Amos (cf. 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5; 5:6; 7:4), this is the first instance in which the Lord is identified with the fire.

³¹² Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 153.

unit to a conclusion. As in 5:11a, לָכֵן (*therefore*) in 5:13a stands as a concluding particle, indicating that those responsible for the actions detailed in the first part of the unit would pay the consequences.

(6) In spite of the absence of an introductory formula, a new direct speech (5:14a–15d) begins in 5:14a. Since 5:14a is an asyndetic clause, it cannot be connected to the previous unit and, therefore, a separate unit is formed. The direct speech opens with an imperative clause, 5:14a, with three further imperative clauses, 5:15a, 15b and 15c, also occurring in the unit. As 5:15a is another asyndetic clause, it is possible that 5:14a–15d is divided into two parts, namely 5:14a–f and 15a–d. In the first part (5:14a–f), a wish or command is expressed: seek good and not evil (דַּרְשׁוּ טוֹב וְאַל רָע), the purpose of which is revealed to be, that you may live (לְמַעַן תִּחְיִי). The particle מַעַן serves to reveal the purpose as proposed in 5:14c, with the particle כִּן in 5:14d being an indicator of a much more profound intention as disclosed, and brings a climax to this in 5:14d–e: *that it may be thus that the LORD, the God of hosts, be with you* (וַיְהִי־כֵן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת אִתְּכֶם). It is strange that the divine naming should appear here in this elaborate form. Likewise, in the second part (5:15a–d), after a number of demands are made through the imperative verbs, hate evil, love good and establish justice, the possibility of salvation arises in 5:15d: *perhaps the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph* (אִילָּנִי יִחְנֹן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת יוֹסֵף). It is the particle adverb אִילָּנִי that indicates this expression of hope. As in 5:14e, a similar elongated form of the divine naming is seen in 5:15d.

(7) In unit 5:16a–17c, the solemn divine speech formula לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֲדֹנָי (*therefore, thus said the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord*) in 5:16a introduces a new direct speech of the Lord. The concluding divine speech formula אָמַר יְהוָה (*said the LORD*) in 5:17c indicates that the divine speech ends in 5:17b. The *verbum dicendi* אָמַר occurs in both formulas. Here again, in 5:16a, an elaborate form of the divine naming occurs, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֲדֹנָי however, showing a slight variation with the addition of the word אֲדֹנָי. Recorded in this direct speech is a lamentation with the כִּי clause in 5:17b providing the reason for the lamentation as: אַעֲבֹר־כִּי בְקִרְבְּךָ (*for I pass through your midst*). The speech formula אָמַר יְהוָה immediately following, identifies the first person singular form attached to the *yiqtol*-form as the Lord.

(8) The interjection הוֹי (*alas!*)³¹³ opens a new direct speech in 5:18a–20d, with the interrogative clause לְמַה־זֶּה לָכֶם יוֹם יְהוָה (*what does the day of the LORD mean for you?*) in 5:18c being part of the direct speech. So too are clauses 5:19a–c, where, through the particle of comparison כַּאֲשֶׁר, they relate to what has been said in 5:18. The interrogative particle הֲלֵא in 5:20a introduces a rhetorical question, with the direct discourse continuing through 5:20a–d as a result.

(9) 5:21a–27c: even though 5:21a–27a is a direct speech, it is not a continuation of the direct speech in 5:18a–20d. The distinguishing element is that it is the Lord who speaks in this unit as attested by the concluding divine speech formula אָמַר יְהוָה (*said the LORD*) in 5:27b. In addition, the direct speech opens with an asyndetic clause שָׂנְאֵתִי (*I have hated*) in 5:21a. The speech of the Lord is emphatic in 5:21a–27a as most of the verbs are in the first person form, such as שָׂנְאֵתִי (*I have hated*), מִצִּטֵּיתִי (*I have despised*), אֶרְיֶה (*I will not enjoy*), תַּעֲלוּ־לִי (*bring me*), אֶרְצֶה (*I will not please*), אֶבִּיט (*I will not look at*), מַעֲלִי (*take away from me*), אֶשְׁמַע (*I will not give ear*) and וְהִגַּלִּיתִי (*I will take*), all of which express the Lord's disdain for Israel's feasts and offerings. Nevertheless, by means of a syntactic chiasm, the wish of the Lord is expressed in verse 24, where 5:24a begins with the term מַיִם (*water*), and 5:24b ends with נַחַל (*stream*). Likewise, where 5:24a ends with the term מִשְׁפָּט (*justice*), 5:24b begins with צְדָקָה (*righteousness*).³¹⁴ While many of the first person verbs indicate the rejections by the Lord in 5:21a–27b, the second person pronominal suffixes in 5:21b–23b, such as חֲגִיכֶם (*your feasts*), בְּעֲצֵרֹתֵיכֶם (*your assemblies*), וּמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם (*your gifts*), מְרִיאֵיכֶם (*your peace-offering of fatlings*), שִׁירֵיךָ (*your songs*) and נִבְלִיֶּךָ (*melody of your harp*), indicate the extent of the gulf

³¹³ For a syntactic consideration of הוֹי, see Steven Horine, "A Study of the Literary Genre of the Woe Oracle," *CBTJ* (1989): 74–77.

³¹⁴ Theresa Veronica Lafferty, "The Prophetic Critique of the Priority of the Cult: A Study of Amos 5:21–24 and Isaiah 1:10–17" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2010), 57–58, mentions that the poetic structuration in 5:24 imparts a highlight to the paired terms justice and righteousness and draws the ABB'A' chiasm in this way:

A	water – מַיִם
B	justice – מִשְׁפָּט
B'	righteousness – צְדָקָה
A'	wadi – נַחַל

Also Hyman remarks, "the combination of a chiasmic parallelism built on the word-pair of justice and righteousness and a surprising rise in abstraction from the prior language makes the rhythmic sound of 5:24 notable and memorable." Ronald T. Hyman, "Amos 5:24: Prophetic, Chastising, Surprising, Poetic," *JBQ* 30 (2002): 232.

between the actions of the people and the Lord. The expression in 5:27c is also notable for its emphatic tone: *the LORD, God of hosts is his name* (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ).

(10) 6:1a–2f: a new unit begins in 6:1a. The interjection הוּא at the beginning generates a direct speech. This particle interjection הוּא refers back to the הוּא in 5:18a and establishes a connection between these units. The direct speech started in 6:1a continues right through 6:2a–f as this unit is comprised of a number of imperative verbal forms: עָבְרוּ (*pass over*) in 6:2a, וּרְאוּ (*see*) in 6:2b, וּלְכוּ (*go*) in 6:2c, וַיֵּדוּ (*go*) in 6:2d and the particle interrogatives הָאֵל in 6:2e and אֵם in 6:2f.

(11) 6:3a–7c: in 6:3a there is no evidence of first or second person usage, thus indicating that the direct speech of the previous unit is not continuing. The pronoun changes from the second person plural form to the third person plural form in 6:3a, and continues thus right up to 6:7c. The particle לָכֵן in 6:7a brings a judgemental conclusion to the accusations contained in 6:3a–6c. In addition the term עֵתָּה indicates that judgement is imminent.

(12) The next unit 6:8a–e contains a direct speech of the Lord. The *qatal* clause which contains the *verbum dicendi* נִשְׁבַּע (swore) introduces this direct speech.³¹⁵ The verbless speech formula יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת נֹאֵם (*utterance of the LORD, the God of hosts*) in 6:8b immediately follows the introductory formula הָאֵל בְּנַפְשׁוֹ יְהוָה נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנָיִי (*the Lord GOD has sworn in his soul*) in 6:8a, thereby solemnising the speech of the Lord. A number of verbs in first person forms, namely, מִתְאַבֵּר אֲנִי (*I abhor*), שָׂנְאֵתִי (*I hated*) and וְהִסְגֵּרְתִּי (*I will deliver up*) record in 6:8c–e the words and actions of the Lord. These first person forms underline the seriousness of the oaths sworn by the Lord.

(13) A change of speaker is observed in 6:9a–10k. While verbs in first person forms are to be found in the previous unit, 6:9a begins with a verb in *w^eqatal*-form, with the discourse marker הִיא in third person form (וְהִיא), which is the introduction for what is about to take place. The *w^eqatal*-form continues until 6:10k and therefore 6:9a–10k forms a single unit.

(14) 6:11a–12d: the conjunction כִּי and interjection הִנֵּה introduce a new direct speech in 6:11a. It can be observed that the direct speech continues until 6:12a–d because of the

³¹⁵ Conklin notices the absence of a formal marker for the oath content in Amos 6:8. Here the oath is not marked by כִּי as in Amos 4:2. See Conklin, *Oath Formulas in Biblical Hebrew*, 63.

interrogative character of 6:12a–b and the second person masculine plural form הִפְכֶתֶם in 6:12c.

(15) 6:13a–c: a direct speech with a first person verb (קִהֵנִי) and a first person preposition suffix לִנִּי, which is introduced by the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר can be seen in 6:13a–c.

(16) Even though, 6:14a–f is a direct speech and not a continuation of the previous direct speech in 6:13c. 6:14a–f is a direct speech of the Lord, attested by the formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי in 6:14c. The conjunction כִּי, the interjection הִנֵּה and the second person suffix עֲלֵיכֶם in 6:14a, the vocative בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל in 6:14b, the verbless divine speech formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי in 6:14c and the second person suffix אַתְּכֶם in 6:14e are the elements that characterise the direct speech in 6:14a–f.

Having analysed the minor units and the syntactic peculiarities of the clause divisions within the minor units, the following section focuses on the elements that unite the minor units, and thus form the bigger units. These bigger units are: 5:1a–5e, 6a–13c, 14a–17c; 5:18a–6:2f, 6:3a–8e, 9a–14f.

(1) 5:1a–5e: unit 5:1a–5e consists of two direct speeches. The joining elements between 5:1a–3f and 4a–5e are the occurrences of the syntactic marker כִּי and the divine speech formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה in both 5:3a and 4a.

(2) 5:6a–13c: the exhortation to seek the Lord in 5:6, followed by a description of the Lord mostly using participle verbs in 5:8 and 9, and the appearance of the Lord in first person verbal forms in 5:12 are the connecting factors. In addition to this, the presence of the particle לִכֶּן in both 5:11a and 13a confirms that 5:6–13 is a single unit.

(3) 5:14a–17c: the imperative forms are used many times in verses 14 and 15. Apart from this, the repeated long divine naming הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵי הַצִּבְאוֹת in 5:14e, 15d and 16a is an important connecting factor.

(4) 5:18a–6:2f: the significant syntactic element in connecting these units is the interjection הִי found in both 5:18a and 6:2a.

(5) 6:9a–14f: the repeated occurrence of *w^eqatal*-forms connects the units.

The relation between the units continues and the bigger units, which are closely related, form the two major units 5:1a–17c and 5:18a–6:14f. The first major unit 5:1a–17c consists

of many direct speeches (5:1a–3f, 4a–5e, 6a–11g, 12a–c, 14a–15d, 16a–17c). The various direct speeches are either introduced by an introductory speech formula *כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי* (5:1a–3f, 4a–5e, 16a–17c) or they end with a concluding speech formula *יְהוָה אָמַר* (5:16a–17c). The final direct speech in this major unit (5:16a–17c) is marked twice, having both an introductory and a concluding speech formula. When this is not the case, the remaining direct speeches have either a verbal foreground form, namely, *שָׁמְעוּ* (5:1a–3f) and *דִּרְשׁוּ* (5:6a–11g, 5:14a–15d), or an ‘I’-figure (*יְדַעְתִּי*) denoting the Lord (5:12a–c). Even though the second major unit 5:18a–6:14f has numerous direct speeches (5:18a–20d, 21a–27c; 6:1a–2f, 8a–e, 11a–12d, 14a–f), with the ‘I’-figure denoting the Lord, they are neither introduced by nor concluded with a speech formula containing a *verbum dicendi*. Instead, what is seen in those direct speeches are two verbless formulas, *נִאֲמַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צָבָאוֹת* in units 6:8a–e and 14a–f, as well as a number of *w^{eqatal}* verbal forms. It is worth noting that, while the interjection *הוֹי* is nowhere to be found in the first major unit, it occurs twice in the second, once in 5:18a and then in 6:1a. Also, the expression *אָמַר יְהוָה*, with repeated occurrences in the first major unit (5:3a, 4a, 16a and 17c), is found once only in the second (5:27b).

6.1.3 Summary

- The two major units 5:1–17 and 5:18–6:14 are not two independent units. Rather, they are interrelated and the formulaic expression *שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה* at the beginning (5:1a) joins them as the word to be heard is recorded in the first part as a lamentation, and in the second as a woe.
- The multiple occurrences of the long divine namings, such as *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צָבָאוֹת אֱדַנִּי* (5:16a) and *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצָּבָאוֹת* (5:14e, 6:8b, 14c), and also the phrases *יְהוָה שָׁמוּ* (5:8f) and *אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת שָׁמוּ* (5:27c) in 5:1–6:14, is worthy of note.
- Many times Israel is referred to as *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל* (5:1c, 3f, 4a, 25b; 6:1d, 14b) in 5:1–6:14.
- The verbal character of 5:1–6:14 is discursive.
- Unit 5:1–6:14 has a significant number of direct speeches (5:1a–3f, 4a–5e, 6a–11g, 12a–c, 14a–15d, 16a–17c, 18a–20d, 21a–27c; 6:1a–2f, 8a–e, 11a–12d, 14a–f) mostly attested by direct speech formulas.

6.2 TEXT-SEMANTICS: AMOS 5:1–6:14

6.2.1 Fallen Israel (5:1–17)

The main elements of the unit are as follows:

- (i) a lamentation for the fall of Israel (5:1a–3f)
- (ii) an invitation to Israel to repent and to seek the Lord (5:4a–6e)
- (iii) accusing Israel for upending righteousness (5:7a–b)
- (iv) a description of the power of the Lord (5:8a–9b)
- (v) a warning for those engaged in perverting justice (5:10a–13c)
- (vi) an exhortation to seek good and not evil, and thus survive (5:14a–15d)
- (vii) a prediction of impending punishments, followed by lamentations (5:16a–17c)

A discernible chiastic pattern emerges in the unit, with the description of the power of the Lord placed between the chiastic elements lamentation, exhortation and perverted justice.³¹⁶

- A lamentation (5:1a–3f)
- B exhortation (5:4a–6e)
- C perverted justice (5:7a–b)
- D description of the Lord (5:8a–9b)
- C' perverted justice (5:10a–13c)
- B' exhortation (5:14a–15d)
- A' lamentation (5:16a–17c)

³¹⁶ Many scholars have discerned a chiastic pattern in Amos 5:1–17, however, these particular chiastic elements mentioned in the text are my own presentation. For various chiastic structures, see Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, 158–59; Jan de Waard, “The Chiastic Structure of Amos V 1–17,” *VT* 27 (1977): 176; Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 222; Georg Steins, “Das Chaos Kehrt Zurück! Aufbau und Theologie von Amos 3–6,” *BN* 122 (2004): 38.

The occurrences of chiastic elements are outlined in the table below.

verses	chiasm	chiastic element
(A) 5:1a–3f (A') 5:16a–17c	lamentation	מִסְפָּד in 5:1a and נָהָי in 5:16f, in 5:16b, 16f, 17a, אָבָל in 5:16e
(B) 5:4a–6e (B') 5:14a–15d	exhortation	דָּרַשׁ in 5:4b, 6a and 14a, הָיָה in 5:4c, 6b and 14c, יוֹסֵף in 5:6c and 15d
(C) 5:7a–b (C') 5:10a–13c	perverted justice	צָדִיק in 5:7b and צָדִיק in 12d

6.2.1.1 Lamentation

Unit 5:1a–3f opens with the prophet demanding of Israel that it listen to the words of mourning which he is about to proclaim: אֶנְכִּי נֹשֵׂא עֲלֵיכֶם קִינָה (*I am carrying against you a lamentation*, 5:1b).³¹⁷ The language used in the lamentation to describe the situation in which Israel finds itself, paints a desolate and bleak picture – נָפְלָה (*she is fallen*) in 5:2a, לֹא־תוֹסִיף קוּם (*no more to rise*) in 5:2b–c, נִטְשָׁה (*she is forsaken*) in 5:2e and אֵין מְקִימָהּ (*there is none to raise her up*) in 5:2f.³¹⁸ That she has fallen, never to rise again, has been abandoned and left with no prospect of being rescued, attests the gravity and hopelessness of the predicament.³¹⁹ Also, the prediction that only a small number, a remnant, would survive to defend the house of Israel (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל), bears witness to the scale of the disaster predicted in the direct speech of the Lord (5:3b–f). The term יָצָא (*goes forth*) in 5:3c and e, as well as the references to decreasing numbers hint at the prospect of war,³²⁰ where many will perish, leaving very few to fight. Even so, the expression תִּשָּׁאֵר עֶשְׂרֵה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל (*will be left ten for the house of Israel*, 5:3f), suggests that there could yet be a small glimmer of hope for Israel.

³¹⁷ On this theme of lamentation see Radine, ““Hear this Word that I Take Up over You in Lamentation” (Amos 5:1),” 2, where he remarks that the book of Amos is overflowing with references to grief and mourning.

³¹⁸ John J. Schmitt, “The Virgin of Israel: Referent and Use of the Phrase in Amos and Jeremiah,” *CBQ* 53 (1991): 387, remarks that generally a בְּתוּלָה (*virgin*) is one who still lives under the protection of her father. But in Amos 5:2, the hopeless situation of בְּתוּלָה יִשְׂרָאֵל is portrayed and this indicates that the divine judgement is imminent and the divine protection is no more.

³¹⁹ The situation where ‘no one is to lift’ confirms the gravity of their wickedness and moreover, the divine intervention is absent here. See Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, 85; Thomas J. Finley, *Joel, Amos, Obadiah: An Exegetical Commentary* (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2003), 198.

³²⁰ Num 1:3, 20–46; Deut 20:1; 1 Sam 8:20; 18:30.

The language employed in the second lamentation (5:16a–17c), introduces a much more serious tone than that of the first. The elaborate divine naming, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֲדֹנָי, adds a sense of solemnity to the direct speech in 5:16b–17b. As opposed to the elegy, as indicated by קִינָה, the many interchangeable terms used to describe the mourning create an atmosphere permeated by acute grief.³²¹ The word מִסְפָּד (*wailing*) occurs in 5:16b, 16f, and 17a, while the synonyms הוֹיֵהוּ (*alas! alas!*) in 5:16d, אָכַל (*mourning*) in 5:16e and נָהִי (*lamentation*) in 5:16f reflect the intense nature of this lamentation. 5:16b brings the ominous warning that wailing would be heard everywhere (בְּכָל־רְחֹבוֹת מִסְפָּד). The implication is that רָהֹב (*place*), the market place, which is situated outside the city gate, and a place where people meet and engage positively with each other, would now become a space where only weeping and cries of anguish would be heard. That this would apply to everyone, without exception, is confirmed by the expression בְּכָל־רְחֹבוֹת (*in all places*) which is parallel to וּבְכָל־חֻצוֹת (*in all streets*) in 5:16c and וּבְכָל־כַּרְמִים (*in all vineyards*) in 5:17a, with all three combined leaving no doubt that this deep mourning would be total. Above all else, the declaration of the Lord פִּי־אֶעֱבֹר בְּקִרְבְּךָ (*for I pass through your midst*) in 5:17b, an allusion to Exodus 12:12,³²² has an extremely menacing tone.

6.2.1.2 Exhortation

In contrast to the gloom of the first lamentation, the exhortation (5:4a–5e) brings a more hopeful outlook.³²³ The instruction of the Lord, דְּרִשׁוּנִי וְחִי (*seek me and live*, 5:4b–c), suggests that there is yet a chance of survival.³²⁴ However, there is an accompanying warning regarding the shrines at Bethel, Gilgal and Beersheba and their false practices. Israel is advised to stay away from these places and to avoid evil, *do not seek Bethel, and do*

³²¹ R. W. L. Moberly “Lament,” *NIDOTTE* 4:866–84, describes the concept of lament in the Hebrew Bible and explains the related terms for lament.

³²² “For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the LORD” (Exod 12:12) [This quotation is taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)]. For further discussion, see J. L. Crenshaw, “Amos and the Theophanic Tradition,” *ZAW* 80 (1968): 206.

³²³ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 224, notes the content difference between 5:1–3 and 4–6. Maclean remarks that it is worth noting this appeal to repent, as the words of Amos concentrate for the most part on the divine judgement and rarely on any expectation of hope. H. Maclean, “Amos and Israel,” *RTR* 18 (1959): 5.

³²⁴ Amos 5:4 presents a possible way to restore the relationship with the Lord through repentance. See Roy F. Melugin, “Amos in Recent Research,” *CurR* 6 (1998): 69.

not enter into Gilgal, and do not pass over to Beersheba (5:5a–c).³²⁵ The irony is that far from enhancing their prospect, seeking out these places brings no chance of survival.³²⁶ The Lord himself proclaims that Gilgal faces exile (כי הגלגל גלה יגלה, 5:5d) and Bethel, by being associated with sin, would be brought down (ובית־אל יהיה לזאנון, 5:5e).³²⁷ The reason for seeking the Lord is revealed in 5:6c כִּי־יִצְלַח כְּאֵשׁ בֵּית יוֹסֵף (lest he will break out like fire upon the house of Joseph),³²⁸ with the catastrophic consequence of failure to do so seen in 5:6d–e: וְאִין־מִכְבֶּה לְבֵית־אֵל (it [fire] will devour and there will be no one to quench [it] for Bethel).³²⁹ The identification of the Lord with fire is significant as it not only conveys the power of the Lord, but also the all-consuming nature of the punishment to be inflicted on those who continue to reject him.

The placing of the exhortation to *seek good and not evil* in 5:14a–b and *hate evil and love good and establish justice* in 5:15a–c immediately before the lamentations in 5:16a–17c, effectively providing the opportunity to survive. The exhortation is arranged in two parts.

➤ First part – 5:14a–f

דָּרְשׁוּ־טוֹב (seek good, 5:14a) and וְאַל־רָע (not evil, 5:14b)

- Outcome: תִּהְיֶינָה (survival, 5:14c) and יְהִיָּה אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת אִתְּכֶם (accompaniment of the LORD, God of hosts, 5:14e)

➤ Second part – 5:15a–d

וְהִצִּיגוּ בִשְׂעָר מִשְׁפָּט (hate evil, 5:15a), וְאָהָבוּ טוֹב (love good, 5:15b) and שִׁנְאוּ־רָע (establish justice, 5:15c)

- Outcome: אֵלֵינוּ יְהִיָּה אֱלֹהֵי־צָבָאוֹת (graciousness of the LORD, God of hosts, 5:15d)

³²⁵ These are three traditional shrines (Bethel: Gen 12:8; Gilgal: Josh 4:20; Beersheba: Gen 22:19), however, the demand of the Lord, seek me and not these sanctuaries, indicates their past rejections of the Lord. See Max Anders and Trent C. Butler, eds., *Holman Old Testament Commentary: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 204.

³²⁶ Hunter, *Seek the Lord*, 70.

³²⁷ Chuck Missler, “Supplemental Notes: The Books of Joel and Amos,” 47 remarks, “Gilgal forms a pun on the term “go into captivity” (*galoh yigleh*); and Bethel will become “empty place” (*awen*).

³²⁸ Hunter, *Seek the Lord*, 75–76, notes that this כִּי clause preceded with an imperative sets up a conditional frame indicating life-endangering consequences if the demand of the imperative is not met.

³²⁹ John Barton, “The Theology of Amos,” in Day, *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel*, 193, comments that the worst case scenario is predicted so that people will be shocked and thus come to behave in ways that will avert it.

A number of parallels exist between the two parts: *seek good* (5:14a) and *hate evil* (5:15a); *not evil* (5:14b) and *love good* (5:15b). Similarly, both outcomes are parallel to each other³³⁰ as are both this and the previous exhortation (5:4a–6e), in view of the fact that seeking the Lord and seeking good is seen as one and the same. However, the inclusion of the lamentation, which comes immediately afterwards, implies a failure on the part of Israel to comply with the instructions.

6.2.1.3 Perverted justice

At the heart of all the wrongdoings perpetrated by Israel, and detailed in verses 5:7a–b and 10a–13c is injustice.³³¹ Very evident is Israel's hatred of those prepared to speak the truth and to challenge them for the outrages committed by them. They show total disregard for justice, as this would represent a threat to their comfortable lifestyle and position of power and therefore oppression is the weapon used to maintain the status quo, a theme that runs through the various verses. Examples of this are: *הַהֲפֹכִים לְעֵנָה מִשְׁפָּט* (*turning justice to wormwood*, 5:7a), *וַצִּדְקָה לְאָרֶץ הִנִּיחוּ* (*put righteousness to the ground*, 5:7b), *שָׂנְאוּ בִשְׁעַר מוֹכִיחַ* (*they hated who reproves in the gate*, 5:10a–b), *וַיַּעַן בּוֹשְׁסֵיכֶם עַל־דָּל* (*and who speaks uprightly they abhor*, 5:10c–d), *רַבִּים פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם* (*your transgressions were many*, 5:12b) and *וַעֲצֻמִּים הָטְאוּתֵיכֶם* (*your sins were numerous*, 5:12c). Exploitation of the poor involved despicable acts such as extortion and the use of violence, as indicated in the following verses: *וַיַּעַן בּוֹשְׁסֵיכֶם* (*you impose taxes on the poor one*, 5:11b), *וַיִּשְׁאַט־בָּר תִּקְחוּ מִמֶּנּוּ* (*takes from him tribute of wheat*, 5:11c), *צָרְרִי צְדִיק* (*afflicting the just*, 5:12d), *לִקְחִי כֶפֶר* (*taking bribe*, 5:12e), *וַיִּשְׁעֶר הָטוּ* (*and turn aside the poor in the gate*, 5:12f). All of these acts provide justification for the widespread destruction predicted in units 5:1a–3f and 16a–17c.

6.2.1.4 Description of the Lord

The detailed description of six different actions of the Lord given in verses 5:8a–9b is at the centre of the chiastic pattern in 5:1–17.³³² These actions are:

³³⁰ Repentance precedes the anticipated mercy of God. See Boda, *Severe Mercy*, 312.

³³¹ McKeating, *The books of Amos*, 42; John W. Miller, *Meet the Prophets: A Beginner's Guide to the Books of the Biblical Prophets* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 55–57; Obvious Vengayi, "Israelite Prophetic Marks among Zimbabwean Men of God: An Evaluation of the Conduct of Selected Zimbabwean Church Leaders in Recent Politics," *Exchange* 39 (2010): 170–71.

³³² Mark Daniel Carroll R., "Imagining the Unthinkable: Exposing the Idolatry of National Security in Amos," *ExAud* 24 (2008): 48.

- עֲשֵׂה כִּימָה וְכָסִיל – he is the one who makes the Pleiades and Orion (5:8a)
- וְהַפֵּךְ לַבֹּקֶר צִלְמוֹת – and turns darkness into morning (5:8b)³³³
- וַיּוֹם לַיְלָה הַחֲשִׁיד – and darkens the day into night (5:8c)
- הַקּוֹרָא לַמַּיִם הַיָּם – he calls for the water of the sea (5:8d)
- וַיִּשְׁפֹּךְ עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ – and pours them out upon the face of the earth (5:8e)
- הַמַּבְלִיג שֹׁד עַל־עַז – he brings destruction on the strong (5:9a)

The first two actions affirm the Lord's creative power as well as his ability to change the shadow of darkness – a reflection of the desolate situation portrayed in the lamentation – to morning, a metaphor for life. The reminder of the actions with their inherent warnings of danger,³³⁴ illustrate the power of the Lord to call down destruction: the Lord to whom Israel is answerable for its wicked ways.³³⁵

6.2.2 Affliction Sustained (5:18–6:14)

Following on from the lamentations in the first major unit, two announcements of woe, 5:18a–20d and 6:1a–2f, similarly characterise the second major unit (5:18–6:14) with the same gloomy atmosphere, a feature of both units. The Lord, with a more enhanced role, puts into effect the powers alluded to in the previous unit, resulting in Israel being held to account and punished for its wrongdoings.³³⁶ Various accusations and judgements against Israel are presented in the text. They are accused of offering empty sacrifices to the Lord (5:21a–27c) and of enjoying a luxurious lifestyle at the expense of the poor whom they have crushed (6:3a–7c), behaviour for which they have shown no remorse. The Lord swears an

³³³ Smith notices that the participle הִפֵּךְ in 5:8 brings about a contrast to the same participle used in 5:7. The contrast is between an action of the Lord and that of the people of Israel. See Smith, *Amos*, 159. The verb *turn* (הִפֵּךְ) in 5:8a is completely opposite to the verb *turn* (הִפֵּךְ) in 5:7a, which is a clause just before this description of the Lord. In 5:7a–b the people turn justice to wormwood creating a darkened situation, whereas in 5:8b, the Lord turns the shadow of death into morning.

³³⁴ “Verses 8–9 establish the credibility and power of Israel’s God, who is not only Lord of creation but also Lord of history. This God, who made the stars and galaxies, who summoned sea waters and poured them out over the earth, who brought destruction and ruin, is named LORD.” Carol J. Dempsey, *Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk*, New Collegeville Bible Commentary: Old Testament 15 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 26.

³³⁵ Smith, *Amos*, 101.

³³⁶ Gerstenberger comments that woe is a form of speech which the prophets used in their writings to proclaim the forthcoming doom and destruction to wrongdoers. See Erhard Gerstenberger, “The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 253.

oath (6:8a) and expresses hatred for the pride of Jacob (6:8c), proclaiming complete destruction (6:9a–10k), ruin in response to the perversion of justice (6:11a–13c) and exile (6:14a–f).

6.2.2.1 Woe Announcements

The minor unit (5:18a–20d) at the beginning of the second major unit, opens with the declaration that woe would befall those who desire the day of the Lord. Preceded by the interjection הוי (*alas!*) and immediately followed by the question, *what does the day of the LORD mean for you?* The irony of the situation quickly becomes apparent, in that, the eagerly anticipated day of the Lord, which promised so much hope and a future filled with happiness, instead offers only darkness.³³⁷ The action that Israel, by rushing to the shrines and offering up empty sacrifices in the expectation that they would please the Lord and thus be saved, is mere folly and an absurdity.³³⁸ The vocabulary employed very effectively conveys the sense of darkness and danger associated with the day of the Lord.

darkness	danger
הוא־חָשֶׁךְ – it is darkness (5:18d, 20a)	יָנוּס אִישׁ מִפְּנֵי הָאֲרִי וּפָגְעוּ הַדֵּב from the face of a lion meeting a bear (5:19a–b)
לֹא־אוֹר – not light (5:18e, 20b)	
אֶפְלַל – even darkness (5:20c)	וַיִּשְׁכּוּ הַנָּחָשׁ – a serpent will bite him (5:19e)
לֹא־נֹגֵה – no brightness (5:20d)	

The repeated references to the absence of light serve to highlight not only the sense of hopelessness, but also that this longed for day was going to be one of retribution, when Israel would be held to account for its evil ways, and not the one it believed would bring salvation.³³⁹ In addition, the comparison of a man's encounter with three animals (a lion, a

³³⁷ John Barton, *The Theology of the Book of Amos*, Old Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 62–63; Daniel E. Fleming, “The Day of Yahweh in the Book of Amos: A Rhetorical Response to Ritual Expectation,” *RB* 117 (2010): 29.

³³⁸ Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 167.

³³⁹ “Thus, for Amos, contrary to the expectations of the people of Israel that the day of the Lord is to be a day of redemption and joy, it will instead turn into a day of disaster.” See Shimon Bakon, “The Day of the Lord,” *JBQ* 38 (2010): 151. See also John Barton, “The Day of Yahweh in the Minor Prophets,” in McCarthy and Healey, *Biblical and Near Eastern Essays: Studies in Honour of Kevin J. Cathcart*, 69; Tim Bulkeley, “The Book of Amos and the Day of Yhwh,” *Colloq* 45 (2013): 145–69; Hasel, *Understanding the Book of Amos*, 111.

bear and a snake)³⁴⁰ to what awaits, intensifies the terror of the sudden and unexpected disasters to come on the day of the Lord.³⁴¹ The episode in 5:19, which shows the irony of someone escaping the jaws of a lion only to be confronted by an equally dangerous bear, and then, having evaded danger a second time, enters his house, which he considers to be a place of refuge, only to be bitten by a snake, makes clear that all attempts to reach safety are ultimately futile.³⁴² In short, all hope is lost, and only woe remains.³⁴³

A further woe, beginning once again with the interjection הוי (*alas!*), is recorded in 6:1a–2f, where irony is employed once more to convey the message. The speech is directed against those at ease in Zion, who trust in their own ability to confront and defeat any enemy.³⁴⁴ The term נַחֲשׁוּ (*at ease*) in 6:1b suggests that a feeling of security exists in Zion and on the hill of Samaria, a view that is challenged by the references to the fall of other kingdoms, namely, Calneh (6:2a), Hamath (6:2c) and Gath (6:2d) which were considered to be just as powerful as Israel, if not more so.³⁴⁵ However, the irony is that, given what has happened elsewhere, foolishly putting their faith in their own strength will actually lead to the realisation that they are indeed vulnerable and far from indestructible.

6.2.2.2 Not Sacrifices, but Justice

Unit 5:21a–27c, which deals with Israel's cultic practices, and the preceding unit 5:18a–20d, which concerns the day of the Lord, are parallel in terms of the shock caused by the

³⁴⁰ In Genesis man had been instructed to rule over every living creature (Gen 1:28), however, in Amos 5:19 he fails to do so. Nahkola comments that a heightening of the sense of horror is the intention of the hostile meeting with these three animals. See Aulikki Nahkola, "Amos Animalizing: Lion, Bear and Snake in Amos 5:19," in Hagedorn and Mein, *Aspects of Amos*, 103–104.

³⁴¹ Hasel, *Understanding the Book of Amos*, 112, suggests "the picture of the person, however, is to be applied to the nation and not to a single individual or group within Israel." However, in my opinion, the individual present at the description of the day of the Lord is an anonymous individual, in view of making a comparison. This comparison is brought forth to highlight the dangerous situation that awaits Israel on the day of the Lord.

³⁴² Viberg, "Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony," 110, describes the dramatic irony scene in 5:19 as "a man manages to flee from a lion, a remarkable achievement in itself, only to come upon a bear! Somehow he escapes the bear as well, comes home and rests his hand against the wall, only to be bitten by a snake. The point of the irony is clear; just as he thought he was safe, he was lost."

³⁴³ James D. Nogalski, "The Day(s) of Yahweh in the Book of the Twelve," in *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, ed. Paul L. Redditt and Aaron Schart, BZAW 325 (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2003), 204, mentions that when the day comes escape will be impossible. See also Fanie Snyman, "Amos, Prophet of God's Justice," in *The Lion Has Roared. Theological Themes in the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament*, ed. H. G. L. Peels and S. D. Snyman (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 23.

³⁴⁴ For a discussion on the idol of national security and the futility of trusting in military strength, see Carroll R., "Imagining the Unthinkable: Exposing the Idolatry of National Security in Amos," 46–53.

³⁴⁵ J. J. M. Roberts, "Amos 6.1–7," in *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson*, ed. James T. Butler, Edgar W. Conrad and Ben C. Ollenburger, JSOTSup 37 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 158–59.

announcements and the reversal of expectations.³⁴⁶ Irony is another connecting element. In this unit, the sacrifices expected to be pleasing to the Lord are, in fact, detested by him.³⁴⁷ The following table outlines the irony.

verses	offerings	rejections
5:21a–b	חַגֵּיכֶם (<i>your feasts</i>)	שָׁנֵאתִי (<i>I hated</i>), מָאַסְתִּי (<i>I despised</i>)
5:21c	בְּעֲצֻרְתֵּיכֶם (<i>your assemblies</i>)	לֹא אֶרְיֵחַ (<i>I will not enjoy</i>)
5:22a–b	וּמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם (<i>your gifts</i>)	לֹא אֶרְצֶה (<i>I will not please</i>)
5:22c	מִרְיָאֵיכֶם (<i>your peace-offering of fatlings</i>)	לֹא אֲבִיט (<i>I will not look</i>)
5:23a	שִׁירֶיךָ (<i>your songs</i>)	הִסֵּר מֵעָלַי (<i>take away from me</i>)
5:23b	נֶגְלִידֶךָ (<i>melody of your harp</i>)	לֹא אֶשְׁמָע (<i>I will not give ear</i>)

It is evident how displeasing to the Lord their sacrifices and offerings were, how contemptible and hateful their assemblies and feasts were, and how irritating their songs and instrumental music were. Indeed, although the Lord exhorted them to seek him (5:4a–b), these hypocritical acts of worship which were carried out while they, at the same time, ignored the principles of social justice, were not what he wanted. This confirms that these offerings were no more than a sham, and not an attempt to find favour with the Lord.³⁴⁸ Moreover, the second person masculine suffix, *your* attached to a succession of nouns, namely feasts, assemblies, gifts, peace-offering of fatlings, songs and harp, indicate that the sacrifices were, in reality, for Israel's own gratification, and not something desired by the

³⁴⁶ Göran Eidevall, "Rejected Sacrifice in the Prophetic Literature: A Rhetorical Perspective," *SEÅ* 78 (2013): 40; Larry J. Rector, "Israel's Rejected Worship: An Exegesis of Amos 5," *ResQ* 21 (1978): 172.

³⁴⁷ An ironic reversal of what is normally expected, see Mays et al., eds., *Harper's Bible Commentary*, 724.

³⁴⁸ Ritual can be evil and varied, when it fails to comply with the Lord's demands regarding justice and righteousness. See Hyman, "Amos 5:24: Prophetic, Chastising, Surprising, Poetic," 233. James L. Mays, "Words about the Words of Amos: Recent Study of the Book of Amos," *Int* 13 (1959): 270, remarks that Israel's worship breached, rather than expressed, genuine worship and supported injustice.

Lord.³⁴⁹ Worthy of note is the declaration that they will be exiled (5:27a) and, as attested in 5:27b–c, that the Lord himself will carry it out. Thus, there is no doubt but that the Lord's rejection of their practices is complete.

In contrast to the prevailing negative tone of 5:21–23, the jussive form in 5:24 highlights the task of promoting justice and righteousness, virtues which the Lord desires.³⁵⁰

- וַיָּגֵל כַּמִּים מִשְׁפָּט – may justice roll down like waters (5:24a)
- וַיִּצְדָּקָה כְּנַחֲלֵי אֵיתָן – and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (5:24b)³⁵¹

Comparing justice and righteousness to rolling waters and an ever-flowing stream respectively in these parallel clauses reinforces their dynamic and life-giving nature. Acts of worship accompanied by justice and righteousness are much more preferred by the Lord than those performed by Israel.³⁵² Similar to the ever-flowing stream and deep waters³⁵³, these qualities should be sustained and must benefit the whole community.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁹ Lafferty, "The Prophetic Critique of the Priority of the Cult," 62, describes that "the people's celebrations are not having any positive effect on God whenever Amos calls them 'yours.'" See also Aaron Schar, "The Fifth Vision of Amos in Context," in Redditt and Schar, *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 53, where he says that the attack is on the people who worship and not on the cult. Eidevall, "Rejected Sacrifice in the Prophetic Literature," 39, remarks that it is vital to examine the use of first person and second person pronouns which suggest that the communication should be looked at in terms of the relationship between the characters. Klingbeil and Klingbeil, "The Prophetic Voice of Amos as a Paradigm for Christians in the Public Square," 171, notices the tension between 'Yours' and 'Mine.'

³⁵⁰ Lafferty, "The Prophetic Critique of the Priority of the Cult," 66, observes that the objects of the jussive verb, justice and righteousness in 5:24 are inanimate. "This combination (jussive plus non-animate objects) provides a greater emphasis on the task at hand than on those who are to accomplish it." Gillingham demonstrates the motif of justice and righteousness in 5:24 and proposes three plausible and multivalent readings of 5:24; justice and righteousness as initiated by God, justice and righteousness as initiated by people and justice and righteousness as the responsibility of the courts of law. See Susan E. Gillingham, *The image, the Depths and the Surface: Multivalent Approaches to Biblical Study*, JSOTSup 354 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 85–88.

³⁵¹ Cf. Isa 48:18.

³⁵² Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, 264; Lafferty, "The Prophetic Critique of the Priority of the Cult," 70.

³⁵³ Lafferty, "The Prophetic Critique of the Priority of the Cult," 69–70; Bob Utley, "Eighth Century Minor Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Jonah and Micah," Bible Lessons International, 2012, www.freebiblecommentary.org, 76. They point out that the terms employed for water imagery do not depend on the seasons or are not portrayed as a trickle, but refer to a generous flow of water that does not dry up or evaporate but should be of benefit to the community.

³⁵⁴ Lafferty, "The Prophetic Critique of the Priority of the Cult," 70–71, 110 emphasised the practice of justice and righteousness in a communitarian manner.

6.2.2.3 Israel accused and punished

In 6:3a–7c various accusations are made against Israel and more specifically against the wealthy. The vocabulary used to describe the scene attests the displeasure of the prophet, for example:

מְטוֹת שֵׁן (ivory couches) and עֲרֻשֹׁתָם (divan) in 6:4a, וְעֹגְלִים וְכָרִים (eating young lambs and the calves) in 6:4b, הִפְכֵּי הַנָּבֶל עַל־פִּי הַנָּבֶל (improvise music on the mouth of the harp) in 6:5a, הַשִּׁתִּים בְּמִזְרָקֵי יַיִן (drink bowls of wine)³⁵⁵ in 6:6a and וְרָאִשִׁית שְׂמָנִים יִמְשְׁחוּ (anoint with the best of oils) in 6:6b.

Entertained in luxurious surroundings, they indulge in all kinds of excesses: gluttony, sloth and carousing were routine. Worst of all, they show no concern whatsoever for the crushing of Joseph (6:6c). Because of this, exile is their fate (עֲתָה יִגְלוּ בְּרֵא גְלִי, 6:7b).³⁵⁶

An oath sworn by the Lord gives prominence to unit 6:8a–e, with the words נִשְׁבַּע אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה (the Lord GOD has sworn in his soul) in 6:8a and the elaborate divine naming יְהוִה אֱלֹהֵי (the LORD, the GOD of hosts) in 6:8b, conveying the serious nature of the oath. The expressions מִתְאָב אֲנִכִּי אֶת־גִּזְאוֹן יַעֲקֹב (I abhor the pride of Jacob) in 6:8c, וְאֶרְמְנֵתִיו שָׂנְאֵתִי (I hated his palace) in 6:8d and וְהִסָּגְרְתִּי עִיר וּמְלָאָהָּ (and I will deliver up the city and all it contains) in 6:8e confirm that the oath is in fact a judgement on Israel.

Punishments abound in verses 6:9a–13c. Beginning with the phrase וְהָיָה (and it will be, 9a), the devastating nature of the punishments is quickly revealed. That many would pay the ultimate price is alluded to in the declaration in 6:9b–c, that if ten remain, ten will die, though the cause of death is unknown.³⁵⁷ This calls to mind 5:3 where it is stated that where there were a thousand, a hundred would remain, and out of a hundred, ten would be left.

³⁵⁵ See a note on the word מִזְרָק and its ironic implications in Oded Borowski, “The Biblical מִזְרָק: What Is It?,” in *Israel’s Prophets and Israel’s Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes*, ed. Brad E. Kelle and Megan Bishop Moore, LHBOTS 446 (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 152–57. See also Jonathan S. Greer, “A Marzeah and a Mizraq: A Prophet’s Mêlée with Religious Diversity in Amos 6.4–7,” *JSOT* 32 (2007): 243–62; Robert B. Coote, *Amos among the Prophets: Composition and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 37–38.

³⁵⁶ Jason Radine, “Vision and Curse Aversion in the Book of Amos,” in *‘I Lifted My Eyes and Saw’: Reading Dream and Vision Reports in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Elizabeth R. Hayes and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, LHBOTS 584 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 91, distinguishes the punishment in 6:7 as a clear case of curse-prophecy, containing a specific threat of exile for the wealthy.

³⁵⁷ Aron Pinker, “Reconstruction of the Destruction in Amos 6,10,” *ZAW* 115 (2003): 425, notes that the fact that all the survivors are in one house (בְּבֵית אֶחָד) and that they die suddenly (וַיָּמָתוּ). He reasons that it may be due to a natural calamity that made the house collapse.

Devastation in the form of the flattening of their houses, great and small, follows: הַבַּיִת הַגָּדוֹל (he will ruin the great house to fragments, 6:11b) and וְהַבַּיִת הַקָּטָן בְּקַעֲיִים (the small house to breaches, 6:11c). The questions *can horses run upon the rock? Or one plough there with cattle?* (6:12a–b) provide the reasons for the punishments. Though seemingly impossible, through their rejection of the Lord, they succeed in turning justice to poison (מִשְׁפָּט לְרֹאשׁ מִשְׁפָּט, 6:12c) and righteousness to wormwood (וּפְרִי צִדְקָה לְלַעְנָה, 6:12d)³⁵⁸ a reminder of 5:7a–b: הַחֵרֶץ הַנִּיחָו: מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה לְאֶרֶץ הַנִּיחָו (turning justice to wormwood and put righteousness to ground).

6:14a–f, the final unit of the chapter, is also very intense in tone. The *futurum instans*, which begins the expression כִּי הִנְנִי מָקִים עֲלֵיכֶם (for, behold, I am going to raise up against you) in 6:14a, hints that some fateful event is shortly about to occur, and a note of caution is sounded. It is ironic that now such an expression is used, given the earlier lament *there is none to raise her up* in 5:2f.³⁵⁹ The prediction is of an invasion on two-fronts, the northern parts of Hamath and the southern torrent valley of Arabah. The implication is that all hope for Israel is gone.

6.2.3 Summary

- The first major unit 5:1–17, is distinguished by a chiasm, through which the ideas presented are reflected back, thereby placing greater emphasis on them.
- Despite the lamentation, accusations and punishments in 5:1–17, the house of Israel is offered the opportunity to seek the Lord and survive.
- Both the lamentation in the first major unit, and the woe announcement which begins the second major unit (5:18–6:14), refer to light being turned to darkness, thus forming a parallelism.
- In the second major unit it is made clear that expecting salvation on the day of the Lord is futile, as is seeking refuge in Zion and on the hill of Samaria. Condemnations and

³⁵⁸ Lénart J. de Regt, “Discourse Implications of Rhetorical Questions in Job, Deuteronomy and the Minor Prophets,” in de Regt, de Waard and Fokkelman in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, 72.

³⁵⁹ Garrett, *Amos: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, 202.

great disasters occur throughout the unit, but unlike in the first major unit, Israel receives no exhortation to seek the Lord and to love good.

- The description of the Lord in 5:1–17 as one who darkens the day into night, who calls upon the waters of the sea and who causes the destruction of the strong, is brought to reality in 5:18–6:14, where the Lord swears an oath to punish the house of Israel.
- Excluding the exhortation to seek the Lord and live, the overall tone in both major units is dark, gloomy, miserable and mournful; multiple accusations relating to the perversion of justice are made, and severe punishments, including death and exile, are inflicted.

6.3 TEXT-PRAGMATICS: AMOS 5:1–6:14

6.3.1 Communication: Lamentation

The two lamentations, 5:1a–3f and 16a–17c come in the form of direct speeches. As the first one does not have any introductory formula, the time of speaking is placed in the now-moment. In the opening phrase, שְׁמָעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה (*hear this word*), a particular word (הַדְּבָר) is addressed to an anonymous ‘you’-figure (שְׁמָעוּ), with the word being revealed in 5:1b: הֲזֵה (הֲזֵה) is addressed to an anonymous ‘you’-figure (שְׁמָעוּ), with the word being revealed in 5:1b: אֲשֶׁר אֶנִּי נוֹשֵׂא עָלֵיכֶם קִינָה (*that I am carrying against you a lamentation*). An ‘I’-figure, the agent of the communication, makes the lamentation against the ‘you’-figure, the addressee. However, the identities of both are unknown. The unidentified ‘you’-figure, along with the now-moment character of the text, raises the possibility that the text-immanent reader is the addressee. However, the occurrence of the vocative בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (*house of Israel*) in 5:1c challenges this argument. The fact that the ‘you’-figure is addressed by the imperative verb (שְׁמָעוּ) in 5:1a, and is in the second person masculine plural suffix (עָלֵיכֶם) in 5:1b, establishes a connection between the text-immanent reader and the vocative (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל), indicating that the lamentation could apply to either. Nevertheless, the task of identifying the ‘I’-figure remains. Although, there is nothing specified in verse 1, verses 2 and 3 suggest that the lament is in fact prophetic. The opening *qatal*-form נָפְלָה (*she is fallen*, 5:2a) introduced a feminine character, someone who has lost her beloved and collapsed, and is identified as בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל (*virgin Israel*) in 5:2d. The lamentation continues in 5:3 in the form of an embedded direct speech of the Lord. This direct speech is introduced by a divine speech

formula *כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי* (*for thus said the Lord GOD*), which has a *verbum dicendi* (אָמַר) in the past perspective, thereby placing the time of speaking in the past. The occurrence of *אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה* (*Lord GOD*) in the third person form suggests that someone other than the Lord is rendering this direct speech, confirming the prophet, and not the Lord, to be the ‘I’-figure.

The communicative process in 5:1a–3f involves the following:

‘I’-figure – the prophet
 ‘you’-figure – could possibly be the text-immanent reader (5:1a–b)
 – the house of Israel (5:1a–3f)

The second lamentation (5:16a–17c), differs from the first in that the agent of the communication here is not the ‘I’-figure. The divine speech formula *כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי* (*therefore, thus said the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord*) which introduces the direct speech clearly shows that it is the Lord who speaks. The ‘I’-figure in 5:17b, *כִּי־אָעֱבֹר בְּקִרְבְּךָ* (*for I pass through your midst*) and the concluding speech formula *אָמַר יְהוָה* (*said the LORD*) in 5:17c equally support this view. Nevertheless, being an embedded direct speech, it is the text-immanent author who renders this direct speech. However, as the introductory formula provides no information as to the identity of the addressee, the text-immanent author addresses no one in particular. Consequently, the direct speech appears to be a description of a very sad and mournful situation. Since no one is addressed by the text-immanent author throughout this lamentation, the one who has access to the text is the text-immanent reader. In 5:17b the Lord addresses a ‘you’-figure in singular form, *כִּי־אָעֱבֹר בְּקִרְבְּךָ* (*for I pass through your midst*), which is something unique, as here, for the first time, an addressee appears in a singular form. This opens the possibility that the text-immanent reader is the main focus of this unit, and could be the ‘you’-figure, though not directly but in an indirect way.

The communicative process in 5:16a–17c involves the following:

The text-immanent author renders the direct speech of the Lord, but addresses no one in particular.
 The Lord speaks of a ‘you’-figure in singular form at the end of the direct speech, which could be an indirect reference to the text-immanent reader.

6.3.2 Communication: Exhortation

(i) The first exhortation, which is a direct speech, occurs in the unit 5:4a–5e. It is introduced by the divine speech formula *כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*for thus said the LORD to the house of Israel*), which provides information about the speaker, the time of speaking and to whom is spoken. It is evident from the formula that it is a direct speech spoken by the Lord to the house of Israel, but rendered by the text-immanent author. The phrase *אָמַר* in the formula places the time of speaking in the past. The verbs *דְּרִשׁוּנִי* (*seek me*), *וְחִיו* (*live*), *וְאַל-תִּדְרֹשׁוּ* (*do not seek*), *לֹא תִבְאוּ* (*do not enter*), and *לֹא תַעֲבְרוּ* (*do not pass over*) in 5:4b, 4c, 5a, 5b and 5c, all attest the addressee as the ‘you’-figure and identify it with *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל*. The exhortation communicates what needs to be done and what should be avoided in order to live.

The communicative process in 5:4a–5e involves the following:

Text-immanent author: the Lord » ‘you’-figure (*בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל*)

(ii) The second exhortation recorded in 5:6a–e and 8a–9b immediately follows the exhortation in 5:4a–5e. However, as there is a different speaker, the direct speech is not a continuation of the direct speech spoken by the Lord in 5:4a–5e, as can be deduced from the opening phrase *דְּרִשׁוּ אֶת-יְהוָה* (*seek the LORD*) in 5:6a, which presents the Lord in the third person form. In 5:6c–d, the Lord as a character is compared to fire, however, a more detailed description of the Lord is given in 5:8a–9b, throughout which he is presented in the third person form. Since there is an absence of any introductory formula, it can be established that the time of speaking is in the now-moment. As in 5:4a–5e, it is addressed to a ‘you’-figure in plural form, attested by the imperative verbs *דְּרִשׁוּ* and *וְחִיו* in 5:6a–b. However, as there is no introductory formula, the identification of the ‘you’-figure is complicated. The now-moment character of the text raises the possibility of the text-immanent reader being the one addressed. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the ‘you’-figure as addressee has already been seen to be present in 5:1a–3f and 4a–5e. In both units the ‘you’-figure is identified as *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל*. Therefore, it is reasonable to identify the ‘you’-figure in 5:6a–b likewise, which establishes a connection between *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל* and the text-immanent reader. The need to seek the Lord as *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל*, is emphatically communicated to the text-immanent reader, with the communication about the Lord adding significance to the exhortation.

The communicative process in 5:6a–e and 8a–9b involves the following:

Prophet » ‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) (which could be the text-immanent reader as well)

(iii) The third exhortation, 5:14a–15d, is also in direct speech form and, not having an introductory formula, it can be said to be in the now-moment. Due to the absence of a direct speech formula, the speaker and the addressee are unknown. Nevertheless, as was the case in the previous exhortations, a ‘you’-figure in plural form is repeatedly addressed, those occurrences being: דַּרְשׁוּ (*seek*) in 5:14a, תִּחְיֶי (live) in 5:14c, אַתֶּם (you) in 5:14e, אָמַרְתֶּם (*you have said*) in 5:14f, שָׂנְאוּ (*hate*) in 5:15a, אָהָבוּ (*love*) in 5:15b, and הִצִּיגוּ (*establish*) in 5:15c. It is safe to say that the ‘you’-figures in all three exhortations are one and the same. It is important to remember the now-moment character of the direct speech, and also the presence of the text-immanent reader. Since there is no speech formula at the beginning, the identification of the ‘you’-figure is open to speculation which provides access for the text-immanent reader. It is evident from the expressions יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צִבְאוֹת אַתֶּם (*the LORD, the God of hosts, be with you*) in 5:14e and אוֹלֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צִבְאוֹת שְׂאֵרִית יוֹסֵף (*perhaps the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph*) in 5:15d, in each of which the Lord is presented in third person form, that it is not he, but the prophet who utters the direct speech.

The communicative process in 5:14a–15d involves the following:

Prophet » ‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) (which could be the text-immanent reader as well)

6.3.3 Communication: Injustice Exposed

(i) Clauses 5:7a and 7b attach to and are a continuation of 5:6a–e, where the speaker is identified as the prophet. Also, it has already been established that 5:6a–e is in the now-moment. Though no second person verb or second person suffix appear in 5:7a as an addressee, the participle verb in the third person plural form הֶהֱפֹכִים (*they [you] who turn*), preceded by a relative particle הַ means that the ‘you’-figure is the same as the one who is addressed in 5:6a–e, and who has already been identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. Due to the now-moment nature of the text, the ‘you’-figure could also be identified as the text-immanent reader to whom applies הֶהֱפֹכִים לְלַעֲנָה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה לְאֶרֶץ הַנִּיחֹו (*you who are turning justice to*

wormwood and put righteousness to the ground) in 5:7a–b, the accusations made by the prophet against *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל*. This is to be taken as a warning against distorting justice.

The communicative process in 5:7a–b involves the following:

Prophet » ‘you’-figure (*בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל*) (which could be the text-immanent reader as well)

(ii) As verses 5:10a–11g form part of the minor unit 5:6a–11g, it is already known that it is the prophet who speaks and that the now-moment is the time of speaking. The concluding particle *לָכֵן* (5:11a) divides the passage into two smaller parts, 5:10a–d and 11a–g. The first part, which gives no information about the addressee, is in the form of a descriptive passage containing details of the course of justice, which is perverted by an anonymous ‘they’-figure: they hated (*שָׂנְאוּ*) and they abhor (*יִתְעֲבֹבוּ*) those who speak uprightly. The second part does, however, provide information about the addressee. An anonymous ‘you’-figure is addressed in 5:11b–g through the use of the verbs *בּוֹשֵׁסְכֶם* (you impose) 5:11b, *בְּנִיתֶם* (you have built) 5:11d, *וְלֹא־תִשְׁכְּבוּ* (you do not dwell) 5:11e, *נִטְעַתֶם* (you have planted) 5:11f and *וְלֹא־תִשְׁתּוּ* (you do not drink) 5:11g.³⁶⁰ This ‘you’-figure has already been identified in 5:1a–3f, 4a–5e, 6a–e and 7a–b as *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל*. Nevertheless, the question remains, who is the ‘they’-figure? The identification of the ‘you’-figure addressed in 5:11a–g helps in identifying the anonymous ‘they’-figure. The accusations against the ‘you’-figure identified as *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל* in 5:11a–g, are in fact, the continuation of the injustices perpetrated by the ‘they’-figure in 5:10a–d. The criticism by the prophet of both figures establishes a connection between them.

The communicative process in 5:10a–11g involves the following:

Prophet » ‘you’-figure (*בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל*) (which could be the text-immanent reader as well)

(iii) Unit 5:12a–c which immediately follows unit 5:6a–11g is also a direct speech with, however, different communication-settings. The *qatal* clause *כִּי יָדַעְתִּי* (*for I knew*) opens the direct speech in 5:12a–c and marks a shift in the text from the now-moment to the past. There is a change in speaker too, from the prophet to the character ‘I’-figure. It is possible to identify this character ‘I’-figure as the Lord because from 5:6 till 5:11 the Lord is presented in a third person form, with the prophet being the one who accuses the ‘you’-figure. Nowhere in 5:12a–c is the Lord presented in the third person form, or is a prophetic

³⁶⁰ Jeremy D. Smoak, “Building Houses and Planting Vineyards: The Early Inner-Biblical Discourse on an Ancient Israelite Wartime Curse,” *JBL* 127 (2008): 24–25.

criticism recorded. *I knew your transgressions were many and your sins were numerous* (5:12a–c) attests that it is the Lord himself who judges the ‘you’-figure, here indicated by the suffixes פִּשְׁעֵיכֶם (*your transgressions*) and חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם (*your sins*). The ‘you’-figure, is the same addressee, as previously identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל in various other units.

The communicative process in 5:12a–c involves the following:

‘I’-figure (= the Lord) » ‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל)

(iv) In unit 5:12d–13c, the final unit in this series, the direct speech is continued. There is a shift from the first person verb (יָדַעְתִּי, *I knew*) and the second person suffix forms (פִּשְׁעֵיכֶם, *your transgressions* and חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם, *your sins*) in 5:12a–c to the third person plural forms (צָרָרִי, *they afflict*, לָקָחִי *they take* and הָטוּ *they had killed*). The unit is a description of how the poor have been denied justice by a ‘they’-figure.

6.3.4 Communication: Woe Announcements

(i) The first woe announcement, which is a lament by the prophet, is contained in a direct speech in unit 5:18a–20d. There is neither an introductory formula nor a concluding formula, rather the direct speech opens with the interjection הוּי. This presumption, that it is the prophet and not the Lord who speaks, comes from the third person usages of the Lord לְמַה־יָּהּ לָכֶם יוֹם יְהוָה (who desire the day of the LORD) in 5:18b and לְמַה־יָּהּ לָכֶם יוֹם יְהוָה (what does the day of the LORD mean for you?) in 5:18c. No past perspective verbs are found in 5:18a–20d, raising the possibility of the now-moment being the time of speaking. The opening clause 5:18b, which begins with a third person form, does not give any indication as to who the addressee might be. Nevertheless, the interrogative sentence לְמַה־יָּהּ לָכֶם יוֹם יְהוָה (5:18c), which immediately follows, does provide some information in this regard. The addressee is a ‘you’-figure, whose identity is disclosed neither here nor anywhere else in the unit. There are two possibilities. It could be the same ‘you’-figure identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל elsewhere, and, if so, one who identifies with the attitude of the ‘third person’ figure mentioned in 5:18b. The ‘you’-figure addressed is longing in vain for the day of the Lord, which is depicted as a day of darkness (5:18d–e, 20a–d), and as one filled with dangers (5:19a–e), even loss of life (5:19e). It is important to note, however, that rather than addressing the third person figure, 5:19a–e provide a description of that figure. The second

possibility is that the ‘you’-figure could be the text-immanent reader, who through the now-moment character of the text, has access to the text and, therefore, could be the addressee of this prophetic הוֹי. The condition of the text-immanent reader is no better than that of the one who desires in vain the day of the Lord.

The communicative process in 5:18a–20d involves the following:

Prophet » ‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל = people longing in vain for the day of the Lord)
(which could be the text-immanent reader as well)

(ii) The second prophetic woe, which opens with the interjection (הוֹי), and which is described in 6:1a–2f, is neither introduced nor concluded by a formula. Due to the absence of an introduction, the time is not known and, therefore, it is possible that the now-moment is the time of speaking. No one is addressed in the opening unit 6:1a–d, while a ‘third person’-figure in plural form is mentioned in 6:1b (הַשְּׂאֲנִיִּים, *who are at ease*), in 6:1c (הַבֹּטְחִים, *those who trust*) and in 6:1d (לָהֶם וּבָאוּ, *and to them came*). They are identified as those who have a mistaken sense of security in trusting in places like Zion, the mountain of Samaria and notables of the nation (6:1b–c). It is interesting to note the expression וּבָאוּ לָהֶם (and to them came the house of Israel) in 6:1d, that shows בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל can resort to them. It is clear that the ‘third person’-figure is not addressed, rather a description of them is found in 6:1b–d. Who is addressed then? A ‘you’-figure who is addressed quite a few times, as attested by the usages עָבְרוּ (pass over) in 6:2a, וּרְאוּ (see) in 6:2b, וּלְכוּ (go) in 6:2c, וַיִּרְדּוּ (go down) in 6:2d and מִגְבֻּלְכֶם (your borders) in 6:2f. These ‘you’-figure usages are not uncommon as they have been identified several times as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. This is true in the present context also. It is the same בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל who is addressed and who is invited to see the ruins of Calneh, Hamath, Gath of the Philistines, and who communicates how foolish it is to rely on the might and power of the nations rather than trusting in the Lord. Due to the now-moment context, the ‘you’-figure could also be identified as the text-immanent reader, to whom the prophetic warning issued in this unit equally applies.

The communicative process in 6:1a–2f involves the following:

Prophet » ‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) (which could also be the text-immanent reader)

6.3.5 Communication: Not Sacrifices, but Justice

The direct speech in 5:21a–27c, which opens without any introduction, contains numerous ‘I’-figure usages, namely, שָׂנְאֹתִי (*I have hated*) in 5:21a, מִאַסְתִּי (*I have despised*) in 5:21b, לֹא אֶרְיֶה (*I will not enjoy*) in 5:21c, אֶם-תָּעִלֵּי-לִי (*bring me*) in 5:22a, לֹא אֶרְצֶה (*I will not please*) in 5:22b, לֹא אֶבִּיט (*I will not look at*) in 5:22c, מֵעָלַי (*from me*) in 5:23a, and לֹא אֶשְׁמָע (*I will not hear*) in 5:23b. As the identity of the ‘I’-figure is unknown, the text-immanent author is embedded in this ‘I’-figure from the beginning and right throughout the unit until the end when, in the divine speech formula (יְהוָה אָמַר, the *LORD said*) in 5:27b, which concludes the direct speech, it is revealed that the ‘I’-figure is in fact the Lord. The ‘I’-figure is thus identified as the Lord. Consequently, it is the Lord who speaks, with the text-immanent author rendering the speech. However, as the text shows two different addressees, the question as to whom is being addressed arises. An addressee as a ‘you’-figure in plural form appears in 5:21b (הַגִּיכֶם, *your feasts*), 5:21c (בְּעֶצְרֹתֵיכֶם, *your assemblies*), 5:22a (וּמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם, *your gifts*), 5:22c (מְרִיאֵיכֶם, *your fatlings*) and as a ‘you’-figure in singular form in 5:23a (שְׁרִירְךָ, *your songs*) and 5:23b (נִבְלִיךָ, *your harp*). The identity of both ‘you’-figures is revealed by the vocative collective noun (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) in 5:2b, to be the same. The Lord communicates to בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל that the feasts, assemblies, burnt offerings, gifts, peace-offering of fatlings, tumult of songs and instrumental music are not acceptable to him (5:21a–23b) and announces exile as punishment (5:27a). Nevertheless, what is desired or acceptable is communicated in 5:24, namely, justice and righteousness (5:24a–b). Concerning the time of speaking, the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר in the concluding speech formula confirms it as being in the past.

The communicative process in 5:21a–27c involves the following:

The text-immanent author renders a direct speech of the Lord, but without addressing anyone.

The Lord addresses a ‘you’-figure in plural form and a ‘you’-figure in singular form identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל.

6.3.6 Communication: Israel Held to Account

The communication-settings in 6:3a–14f are different, despite their similarities in key-motifs.

(i) Unit 6:3a–7c is a description of the extravagant lifestyle of a ‘they’-figure, and is a continuation of the prophetic woe (הוי) detailed in 6:1a–2f. The description concerns the failings of the ‘they’-figure and the resulting punishments. Though the ‘they’-figure is repeatedly mentioned, it is never addressed.

(ii) Having provided a description of the life of excess enjoyed by the ‘they’-figure in 6:3a–7c, the style of communication changes in 6:8a–e to an embedded direct speech by the Lord. This embedded speech is introduced by the divine speech formula נְשַׁבַּע אֲדֹנָיִי יְהוָה בְּנִפְשׁוֹ (6:8a) with the *verbum dicendi* נְשַׁבַּע suggesting that the time of speaking is past. This is followed by the verbless formula נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צָבָאוֹת (6:8b) which adds solemnity to the Lord’s speech. The occurrences of the first person verbs מִתְאַבֵּר אֲנִי (*I abhor*) in 6:8c, שָׂנְאָתִי (*I hated*) in 6:8d and וְהִסְגֵּרְתִּי (*I will deliver up*) in 6:8e in the direct speech denote the actions of the Lord, the speaker. However, no one is addressed in the direct speech.

(iii) Unlike the previous units which contain several first person verbs, unit 6:9a–10k begins with the third person verb וְהָיָה (*and it will be*) in 6:9a. This change to the use of the third person verb indicates that the speech in this unit is not a continuation of the direct speech in 6:8a–e. Being indirect speech, the question of speaker, addressee and time are less significant. Unit 6:9a–10k is merely a description of the punishment to be meted out by the Lord, a description nevertheless, invoking powerful language to depict the scenes contained in the unit.³⁶¹

(iv) Unlike 6:9a–10k, which is a description of the punishment from the Lord, the present unit 6:11a–12d is a direct speech. Even though there is no introductory or concluding formula, the discursive particle כִּי־יְהִיָּה in 6:11a opens the direct speech. The appearance of the Lord in third person form means that the Lord is not the speaker. Therefore, it is a prophetic speech which, as there is no indication about a past perspective character of the text, is in the now-moment. The prophet communicates that punishments from the Lord are

³⁶¹ Pinker, “Reconstruction of the Destruction in Amos 6,10,” 423.

about to be inflicted. However, the opening clause *בִּי־הִנֵּה יְהוָה מֵצִנָּה* (6:11a) says nothing about whom is being addressed, leaving open the possibility that it may be the text-immanent reader. The rhetorical questions in 6:12a–b add to the credence of this interpretation.³⁶² Surprisingly, the situation changes in 6:12c where the prophet confronts a ‘you’-figure for what they have done.³⁶³ Even though this ‘you’-figure could be identified as *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל* as it has been many times, precisely due to the absence of any specific indicators, it could also apply to the text-immanent reader.

(v) Unit 6:13a–c, which is a continuation of unit 6:11a–12d, is a very short unit. Despite this, it draws our attention because, in the expression *הֲלוֹא בְּחֻזְקֵנוּ לָקַחְנוּ לָנוּ קַרְנַיִם* (*did we not capture Karnaim for ourselves by our own strength?*) in 6:13c, the addressee for the first time appears in the first person plural form. It is remarkable that, instead of being addressed, the ‘you’-figure appearing here as ‘we’ is now the speaker. It is worth noting the absence of an addressee, and that the communication is between themselves. This ‘we’ figure hints at the exclusion of the Lord from its considerations.

(vi) The discursive particle *בִּי־הִנֵּה*, which opens the direct speech in 6:14a–f, signals what is about to happen. The communication starts with an ‘I’-figure addressing a ‘you’-figure: *כִּי הֲנִי מֵקִים עֲלֵיכֶם* (*for, behold, I am going to raise up against you,*) in 6:14a, with the identity of the ‘you’-figure being revealed by the vocative *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל* in the following clause. The ‘I’-figure is identified from the divine speech formula *נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת* in 6:14c as the Lord, God of hosts. It is clear from the speech formula that the text-immanent author renders this direct speech of the Lord, but once again there is an absence of an addressee. It is the Lord who communicates to *בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל* that punishment is imminent.

³⁶² Spencer L. Allen, “Understanding Amos VI 12 in Light of His Other Rhetorical Questions,” *VT* 58 (2008): 1–12, explores the rhetorical question in Amos 6:12 and explains how it challenges the audience.

³⁶³ Amos 6:12c–d: *כִּי־הִפַּכְתֶּם לְרָאשׁ מִשְׁפָּט וּפְרִי צִדְקָה לְלֶעֱנָה* (*for you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood*).

The communicative process in 6:3a–14f involves the following:

6:3a–7c: a description.
 6:8a–e: prophet rendering a direct speech of the Lord but not addressing anyone.
 6:9a–10k: a description.
 6:11a–12d: prophet » ‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל).
 6:13a–c: the communication is between themselves. The ‘you’-figure as ‘we’ is speaking.
 6:14a–f: the text-immanent author renders a direct speech by the Lord, addressing no one, however. The Lord God addresses a ‘you’-figure identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל.

6.3.7 Summary

Having examined the communication process in 5:1–6:14, the table presented below provides an overview of the communicative elements in each unit.

unit	speaker	addressee	time of speaking	message communicated
5:1a–3f	‘I’-figure (prophet)	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	lamentation
5:4a–5e	text-immanent author (the Lord)	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל)	past perspective	exhortation
5:6a–e	prophet	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	exhortation
5:7a–b	prophet	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	injustice exposed
5:8a–9b	prophet	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	description of the Lord
5:10a–11g	prophet	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	injustice exposed
5:12a–c	‘I’-figure (the Lord)	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	injustice exposed
5:12d–13c	_____	_____	_____	injustice exposed

5:14a–15d	prophet	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	exhortation
5:16a–17c	text-immanent author (the Lord)	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	past perspective	lamentation
5:18a–20d	prophet	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	woe announcement
5:21a–27c	text-immanent author (the Lord)	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל)	past perspective	not sacrifices, but justice
6:1a–2f	prophet	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	woe announcement
6:3a–7c	————	————	————	Israel held to account
6:8a–e	prophet	————	past perspective	Israel held to account
6:9a–10k	————	————	————	Israel held to account
6:11a–12d	prophet	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	Israel held to account
6:13a–c	‘we’-figure	————	————	Israel held to account
6:14a–f	text-immanent author (the Lord)	‘you’-figure (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) + text-immanent reader	now-moment	Israel held to account

Briefly, 5:1–6:14 contains nine levels of communication:

- The communication between the prophet and the ‘you’-figure identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (5:1a–3f, 6a–11g, 14a–15d, 18a–20d; 6:1a–2f, 11a–12d).
- The communication between the prophet and the text-immanent reader (5:1a–3f, 6a–11g, 14a–15d, 18a–20d; 6:1a–2f, 11a–12d).
- The communication between the ‘I’-figure (the Lord) and the ‘you’-figure identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (5:12a–c).

- The communication between the character Lord and the ‘you’-figure in plural form identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (5:4a–5e, 21a–27c; 6:14a–f).
- The communication between the character Lord and the ‘you’-figure in singular form identified as בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (5:16a–17c, 21a–27c).
- The character Lord addresses no one (5:3a–f; 6:8a–e).
- The communication between the ‘I’-figure (the Lord) and the text-immanent reader (5:12a–c).
- The text-immanent author addresses no one (5:4a–5e, 16a–17c, 21a–27c; 6:14a–f).
- The communication between themselves: the ‘you’-figure as ‘we’ is speaking (6:13a–c).

The analysis in this section is of the communication as it relates to the speaker, the addressee, the time of speaking, the characters, the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader. The people (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל), one of the characters in the text, appear as ‘you’-figure in both plural and singular form and are depicted as receivers of the messages from both the Lord-character and the prophet-character. However, the people fail to pay heed and resist change. The people-character is even addressed twice (i.e. in the two major units), but do not respond positively. In contrast, the Lord-character and the prophet-character in the text change progressively. The divine exhortation (5:4a–5e), the divine accusation (5:12a–c), the divine lamentation (5:16a–17c), the rejection of the sacrifices (5:21a–27c) and the divine oath and utterance (6:8a–e, 14a–f) prove how the Lord longed for the people to return to him. Likewise, the prophetic lamentation (5:1a–3f), woes (5:18a–20d; 6:1a–2f), exhortations (5:6a–8e, 14a–15d), prophetic description of the Lord (5:8a–9b), and accusations and announcement of punishments (5:7a–b, 10a–11g, 13a–c; 6:3a–7c, 9a–10k, 11a–12d, 13a–c) attest the prophetic wish for their repentance. It is obvious from their repeated efforts to convince the receiver-characters (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל) to change their attitude, that both the Lord-character and the prophet-character have a great desire to bring about their return. In relation to the text-immanent author, the impression is that he is aware of what is spoken by the Lord-character. Added to that, he is conscious of the people’s response; for example, in an exhortation by the Lord spoken in the past in 5:4a–5e, the text-immanent author understands

the urgency of the call to seek the Lord. Nevertheless, the absence of a specific addressee suggests desperation that no one is listening. However, the situation changes in 5:16a–17c (the end of the first major unit), where, even though he addresses no one, he is anxious to involve the text-immanent reader as well. As with the character (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל), the text-immanent reader is also warned by the wailing caused by the visit of the Lord.

In the second major unit too, the text-immanent author makes his position clear. He is aware of the mockery of the performance of religious rites by the character בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, who, at the same time, fails in its duty to uphold justice and righteousness. In 6:14a–f, the final unit of the second major unit, he is aware of the punishment in the form of an invasion, about to befall בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל and here again involves the text-immanent reader. Finally, the position of the text-immanent reader is very interesting. On the one hand, he is a witness to everything that is or is not happening, as well as to what should be happening. However, the text-immanent reader is not merely an outside observer. Generally speaking, the time indication is absent in the direct speeches in 5:1–6:14. Therefore, it can be concluded that the direct speeches are in the now-moment in the text, thereby involving the text-immanent reader. This implies that the text-immanent reader could be facing as bad a situation as that awaiting the receiver-characters. There are a number of instances where this scenario is a distinct possibility, for example:

- The miserable conditions of בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל in 5:1a–3f, the first lamentation.
- The prophetic exhortations to respond positively to the Lord's call: 5:6a–e and 14a–15d.
- The prophetic accusations in 5:7a–b and 10a–11g.
- The prophetic הוֹי in 5:18a–20d and 6:1a–2f, where the text-immanent reader desires in vain the day of the Lord, and has a false sense of security in the nations.

Thus, in various ways, the text-immanent reader is taken into the text and becomes directly involved.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this section I intend to examine the role and function of the Lord in 5:1–6:14. The study concerns two areas in particular. In the first phase I examine how and what it is the Lord communicates. In addition to that, in the second phase, I discuss what is said about the Lord in this pericope. This leads to an understanding of how the character Lord speaks, how he is described by the prophet and the text-immanent author, and what the relationship is between them.

➤ On examination of the communication by the Lord-character, it becomes evident from either the introductory or concluding speech formulas that the Lord is the one who speaks. Nevertheless, speech formulas do not form part of Lord's speech, the text-immanent author and prophet character being the ones who employ such formulas. Also, when the Lord appears as a character 'I'-figure, his speech does not have any speech formulas. The 'I'-figure identifies the Lord as the speaker. The Lord's communication with בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל is contained within seven direct speech units, namely, 5:3b–f, 4b–5e, 12a–c, 16b–17b, 21a–27a; 6:8c–e and 14a–f. How and what the Lord communicates in these direct speeches can be explained as follows:

(i) the Lord warns בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

Because of their repeated wrongdoings, בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל is warned many times and in many ways by the Lord. In 5:3b–f disaster in the form of depopulation is predicted. A decrease in the number of the people in cities of a thousand to a hundred, and in cities of a hundred to ten is documented. These decreasing numbers contradict an earlier promise given by the Lord to the ancestors of בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. The promise was that the Lord would bless them and make their offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore.³⁶⁴ According to the announcement in Amos, only 1% of the population would remain after the destruction. Leaving just a remnant indicates the scale of the disaster.

In 5:16b–17b the Lord announces lamentation, with wailing in all places (5:16b). The cry of grief 'alas, alas' would be heard in every street (5:16c–d). The vineyards, places associated with yielding rich harvests, would be filled with tears and turned into places of lamentation

³⁶⁴ Cf. Gen 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4.

(5:17a). The reason for the lamentation is explained by the כִּי clause בְּקִרְבְּךָ (*for I pass through your midst*) in 5:17b, revealing the personal involvement of the Lord in relation to it. The result of the Lord's visit, which would ordinarily be beautiful, joyful and blessed will, on the contrary, be full of much weeping and sorrow.

In 6:8c–e the Lord's warning concerning בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל which is both emphatic and delivered in the form of a solemn vow (וַיִּשָּׁבַע אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ, *the Lord GOD has sworn in his soul*) promises exile as punishment. The term בְּנַפְשׁוֹ (*in his soul*) heightens the intensity of the solemn oath, in which the Lord emphatically states: מִתְאָב אֲנֹכִי אֶת־גִּאוֹן יַעֲקֹב (*I abhor the pride of Jacob*), וְאֶרְמִנְתִּי שְׂנֵאתִי (*and I hated his palace*) and וְהִסְגַּרְתִּי עִיר וּמְלָאָהּ (*and I will deliver up the city and all it contains*).

Unit 6:11a–12d reveals that the Lord is about to do something, with his intentions being disclosed in 6:11b–c. The wrath of the Lord is going to bring annihilation. Their great and small houses will be demolished for they have turned justice into poison (הִפְכֵּתָם לְרָאשׁ מִשְׁפָּט) in 6:12c, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood (וּפְרִי צְדָקָה לְלַעְנָה) in 6:12d. Soon the Lord will punish בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל for their wickedness.

Finally, in 6:14a–f, the Lord announces punishment in the form of invasion bringing with it many dreadful and miserable days for בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. The fact that it is the Lord who raises a nation against Israel to afflict them (כִּי הִנְנִי מְקִים עֲלֵיכֶם גּוֹי וְלִחְצוֹ אֶתְכֶם), adds to the seriousness of the punishments and of the likely consequences.

(ii) בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל is informed of their faults by the Lord himself

The emphatic, intense and personal nature of the communication between the Lord and בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל in 5:12a–c is clearly evident in the 'I-you' speech: כִּי יָדַעְתִּי רַבִּים פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם וְעֲצָמִים חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם: (*for I knew your transgressions were many and your sins were numerous*).³⁶⁵ These remarks are enough to cause deep anxiety among בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, as the realization dawns that not even a single offence escapes the Lord's scrutiny. The implication is that sins committed would bring their own consequences, and though no specific punishment is stated, it is likely that it would be commensurate with the gravity of the sins.

³⁶⁵ What these transgressions and sins are, is elaborated in detail in the foregoing unit 5:11a–g and the succeeding unit 5:12d–f.

(iii) the Lord's passionate call to בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

Despite Israel's many transgressions, the Lord truly longs for their return to himself. Remaining hopeful of their repentance, he is prepared to forgive their faithlessness and their rejections of his commands. His greatest wish is for their survival as attested by the clauses seek me and live (דַּרְשׁוּנִי וְחִי) in 5:4b–c. Failure to do so would lead to the kind of despair alluded to in 5:3b–f. To emphasise the point, בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל is advised against going to Bethel, Gilgal or Beersheba, and is made aware of the disasters which are about to befall these places (*for Gilgal certainly goes into exile and Bethel will come to nothing*) in 5:5d–e. This advice is designed not only to act as a deterrent, but more so to provide encouragement to Israel to mend its ways and survive.

(iv) the Lord desires justice and righteousness and not mere religious practices

The Lord expects not merely the performance of religious practices, but the strict observance of moral principles. Unit 5:21a–27b depicts what the Lord does not appreciate and what he values.

- 5:21a–b the Lord hated (שָׂנְאָתִי + מִצְבֹּתָיו) – the feasts of Israel (חַגֵּיכֶם).
- 5:21c the Lord will not enjoy (לֹא אֶרְיֶה) – the smell of Israel's assemblies (בְּעֶצְרֹתֵיכֶם).
- 5:22a–b the Lord will not be pleased with (לֹא אֶרְצֶה) – Israel's burnt offering and gifts (עֹלֹת וּמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם).
- 5:22c the Lord will not look on (לֹא אֲבִיט) – Israel's peace-offering of fatlings (וְשֶׁלֶם קְרִיאֵיכֶם).
- 5:23a the Lord commands them to take away (הָסֵר מֵעָלַי) – the tumult of songs (וְשֶׁלֶם קְרִיאֵיכֶם).
- 5:23b the Lord will not give ear to (לֹא אֶשְׁמָע) – the melody of the harp (וְזִמְרַת נָבִלִיד).

Of themselves, the liturgical actions of Israel are not bad. However, when detached from the moral norms of daily life, they are not valued by the one to whom they are offered.³⁶⁶ The command of the Lord (5:24), after the rejection of these cultic practices, points to this fact. Needless to say, the absence of justice and righteousness should be the principal argument

³⁶⁶ Constable, "Notes on Amos," 51. "The Israelites were inundating Him with rivers of religiosity, but He wanted rivers of righteousness."

used for the rejection of these cultic practices (5:21–27).³⁶⁷ In the absence of social justice their actions become objects of scorn. As the chosen people, the Lord's rejection comes as a great blow to the Israelites. The rhetorical question in 5:25a–b (*did you bring me sacrifices and offering for forty years in the wilderness, house of Israel?*) acts as a reminder to Israel of the period in the desert. The litany of rejections seen in 5:21a–23b, culminates in exile, for those engaged in insincere religious worship (5:27a). However, amidst all the rejections and expressions of dissatisfaction, it is encouraging to hear the invitation to support justice and righteousness.

5:24a וַיָּגֵל כַּמַּיִם מִשָּׁפֶט (may justice roll down like waters)

5:24b וַיִּצְדָּקָה כַּנָּחַל אֵיתָן (and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream)

In this way, the Lord proposes an alternative to meaningful sacrifices and offerings. Change in the observance of justice and righteousness is the primary concern. Justice and righteousness should never again be overturned and toppled (5:7a–b), but should flow endlessly.³⁶⁸ The sentiment expressed in 5:24a echoes the demand to establish justice made in 5:15c.

Based on the above analysis of the communication by the Lord it is evident that the relationship between the Lord and the house of Israel is rather tense. On the one hand, the Lord announces that disasters (5:3b–f), wailing (5:16b–17a), exile (5:27a, 6:7b, 8e), annihilation (6:11a–12d) and invasion (6:14a–f) are to befall the house of Israel. On the other hand, he invites the house of Israel to live by seeking him (5:4b–c). He despises Israel's religious offerings (5:21a–23b), abhors the pride of Jacob (6:8c) and hates Jacob's palace (6:8d). On the contrary, he requires acts of justice and righteousness (5:24a–b) from the house of Israel. The Lord knows that the transgressions of Israel are many and their sins are numerous (5:12a–c). Therefore, he admonishes the house of Israel to seek him and to live (5:4a–b). Therefore, it is possible to assert that the Lord's communication with the house of Israel is emphatic. At the same time, it can also be said that he approaches the

³⁶⁷ Hanne von Weissenberg, "The Twelve Minor Prophets at Qumran and the Canonical Process: Amos as a "Case Study"," in *The Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Nôra Dávid et al., FRLANT 239 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 373, thinks therefore, that the Qumran movement did not make use of the passages of the Book of Amos that could have been applied in their Temple criticism because of its focus on justice and righteousness.

³⁶⁸ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 248.

house of Israel with great affection. In other words, the aim of the many afflictions announced against the house of Israel is never to bring about their destruction, but rather to save them.

➤ In the communications about the character the Lord, the prophet and the text-immanent author take the initiative in describing the role of the Lord.

(i) the Lord is described as being all-powerful

First of all, in 5:6d–e the prophet expressed his wish that the Lord would not act as an all-consuming fire in the house of Joseph, a fire that no one in Bethel would be able to extinguish (וְאֶכְלָה וְאִין־מִכְבָּה לְבֵית־אֵל). The implication is that no god in Bethel is powerful enough to quench the fire of the Lord of Israel.³⁶⁹ A more detailed description of the Lord is given in 5:8a–9b. The prophet presents the Lord as very powerful, not just over a small land or over a small part of the world, but with regard to everything.

- he creates the Pleiades and Orion (5:8a).
- he can turn the dark into the morning (5:8b).
- he can also darken the day into night (5:8c).
- he calls for the waters of the sea (5:8d) and poures them out over the face of the earth (5:8e).³⁷⁰ Calling out the waters of the sea alludes to the great flood in the days of Noah.³⁷¹
- he causes violence upon the strong and destroys their fortresses (5:9a–b).

All these descriptions of the Lord are emphasised by the prophetic declaration יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ (*the LORD is his name*) in 5:8f. It is a powerful climax to all that is said about the Lord in 5:8a–e and engenders awe. Various examples of the Lord's power occur in this passage:

The Lord is his name, who makes the Pleiades and Orion; the creator of the entire universe. The Lord is his name, who turns the shadow of death into the morning and day into night; he

³⁶⁹ Cf. Amos 7:10–17; 1 Kgs 12:25–33.

³⁷⁰ Often the earth responds following the Lord's voice, however, the people of Israel pay no heed, cf. Amos 1:2; 5:8; 8:8; 9:6. See Hilary Marlow, "The Other Prophet! The Voice of Earth in the Book of Amos," in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Peter L. Trudinger, SymS 46 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2008), 77.

³⁷¹ Cf. Gen 7:1–24.

can bring salvation even in the darkest of situations. Moreover, he can bring destruction just as he can change day into darkest night. The implied idea is that the Lord is so sovereignly powerful that he could change the destiny of Israel from good fortune to distress and vice versa.³⁷² The Lord is his name who calls for the waters of the sea and poures them out over the face of the earth; this confirms the power of the Lord to bring destruction. The Lord is his name, is the mightiest, and he can destroy even the strong. He can do everything, namely, create, save and destroy; for he is the Lord; *the LORD is his name* (יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ). If the Lord possesses such great powers, he can certainly prevail in a small part of the world, the land of Israel.³⁷³ By depicting the Lord in this way, the prophet reminds his listeners that:

- Because he is so powerful, any warning given by the Lord should be taken seriously.
- This necessitates the urgent need to respond positively. Since the Lord is omnipotent the command of the prophet to seek the Lord in 5:6a gains emphasis. His invitation is continued in 5:14a–15d where the house of Israel is called to amend its ways by seeking good, hating evil (5:14a–b, 15a–b) and by establishing justice (5:15c).
- A positive response will bring the assurance that יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-צָבָאוֹת (*the LORD, the GOD of hosts*) will accompany them (5:14e) and will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph (5:15d).
- Such a display of the power of the Lord induces awe and shock, thereby rendering the prudent in 5:13 speechless.³⁷⁴

Because the Lord is all-powerful, he is mightier than Sakkuth and Kaiwan,³⁷⁵ the gods mentioned in 5:26a–b. It is sarcastically mentioned that, while they are in the sedentary state of being carried, they are left powerless. The glorifying description of the Lord in the expression *God of hosts is his name* is the direct opposite of the description of Sakkuth and Kaiwan in 5:26. It is also correct to infer from the text that the Lord who is able to act like a

³⁷² Constable, “Notes on Amos,” 44.

³⁷³ Gordis, “Studies in the Book of Amos,” 225, mentions God’s power to bring transformation in nature. He continues, “since both nature and human society are ruled by God, His capacity to affect radical changes in the former are an earnest of His power and will to transform the latter by bringing destruction upon the wicked.”

³⁷⁴ Matthew Goff, “Awe, Wordlessness and Calamity—A Short Note on Amos v 13,” *VT* 58 (2008): 642, mentions, “the man is shocked before a powerful act of divine violence. He is stunned to the point of wordlessness. At best he can only stammer.”

³⁷⁵ See Radine, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah*, 60–67.

fire cannot be quenched by other gods in Bethel (5:6c–e). There is a reminder here too that when the Lord acts like fire, there is no one in Bethel, even among the gods, capable of quenching the fire.

(ii) day of the Lord as woe

The prophet describes יום יהוה (*day of the LORD*) in a way that is totally different to the expectation of the people. In 5:18d–e and 20a–d he describes יום יהוה as a day of darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ) and not light (לְאִיּוֹר). Moreover, he depicts this day as a day of never-ending disasters including loss of life; like a man who flees from a lion but meets a bear, and who enters his house for safety but is bitten by a snake (5:19a–e).³⁷⁶ This recalls the imagery of the rescue of ‘some pieces’ from the mouth of the lion in 3:12, conveying the message that escaping danger is ultimately impossible.³⁷⁷ Having great expectations of the day of the Lord, despite not having atoned for previous wrongdoing is utter folly. Complete darkness awaits those who fail to heed the warnings from the Lord.

(iii) divine names, divine speech formulas and divine expressions

The prophet and the text-immanent author use various divine names, divine speech formulas and divine expressions when referring to the Lord. The table below outlines these names, formulas and expressions:

divine names	divine formulas	divine expressions
יְהוָה אֱדָנִי יְהוָה (5:3a, 8a)	כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֱדָנִי יְהוָה (5:3a)	יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ (5:8f)
יְהוָה (5:4a, 6a, 17c, 27b, 6:11a)	כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל (5:4a)	יּוֹם יְהוָה (5:18b–c, 20a)
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־צִבְאוֹת (5:14e, 15d, 6:8b, 14c)	לֵכֶן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צִבְאוֹת אֱדָנִי (5:16a)	אֱלֹהֵי־צִבְאוֹת שְׁמוֹ (5:27c)
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צִבְאוֹת אֱדָנִי (5:16a)	אָמַר יְהוָה (5:17c, 27b)	נִשְׁבַּע אֱדָנִי יְהוָה בְּנִפְשׁוֹ (6:8a)
	נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צִבְאוֹת (6:8b, 14c)	כִּי לֹא לְהִזְכִּיר בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה (6:10k)

³⁷⁶ This image of the biting snake, in this sense of bringing destruction, can be seen again in Amos 9:3, Num 21:6–9 and Jer 8:17. See Martin Beck, *Der “Tag YHWHs” im Dodekapropheten: Studien im Spannungsfeld von Traditions- und Redaktionsgeschichte*, BZAW 356 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 61.

³⁷⁷ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 244.

- Of the various names used to denote the Lord, the one most frequently seen is the Tetragrammaton יהוה (*LORD*), which appears five times (5:4a, 6a, 17c, 27b and 6:11a). Next comes יהוה אלהי־צבאות (*Lord, GOD of hosts*), which occurs four times in all (5:14e, 15d, 6:8b and 14c). It is also seen with the addition of אדני following the name in 5:16a. It is generally agreed that the extraordinary length of the divine naming (יהוה אלהי־צבאות), attached to יהוה, adds a certain solemnity to the name and presents the Lord as someone exuding power and authority, and around whom there is a great sense of awe. However, the contexts in which the name is used can be very different. For instance, in 5:14e and 25d, in return for fulfilling the request to love good, to hate evil and to establish justice, the prophet promises the accompaniment and graciousness of the Lord, God of hosts. In 5:16a, 6:8b and 14c, it is employed in the context of the swearing of a divine oath with the purpose of inflicting punishment. While the requests made in the former case have not been fulfilled, many of the divine punishments promised in the latter have been inflicted. Finally יהוה אדני (*Lord GOD*) is used twice, once in 5:3a and again in 5:8a.

- The divine speech formulas serve to introduce or conclude a divine speech, each of them giving emphasis to the speeches of the Lord. The Lord's announcement concerning a disaster in the form of depopulation in 5:3a is introduced by the formula יהוה אדני יהוה, while the formula יהוה אדני יהוה לביית ישראל in 5:4a introduces the invitation of the Lord to the house of Israel to seek him. The formulas יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני in 5:16a and יהוה אלהי צבאות נאם־יהוה אלהי צבאות in 6:8b and 14c contain the same divine naming יהוה אלהי צבאות. These formulas provide an introduction to the speech of the Lord to the house of Israel and come directly before the announcements of lamentation, exile, and invasion. The formula אמר יהוה found twice in both 5:17c and again in 27b, concludes the speeches of the Lord in both 5:16b–17b and 21a–27a.

- The divine expressions יהוה שמו (*LORD is his name*) in 5:8f and אלהי־צבאות שמו (*the LORD, God of hosts is his name*) in 5:27b–c are emphatic in tone. The prophetic declaration יהוה שמו in 5:8f is a fitting climax to the detailed description of the Lord, as it presents him as the fully-fledged character in 5:8a–e.³⁷⁸ Through the addition of צבאות, the text-immanent author gives added emphasis to the speech of the Lord in 5:21a–27a. It is worth mentioning

³⁷⁸ Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos*, 230.

that the expressions *שְׁמוֹ יְהוָה* and *אֶל־הִי־צָבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ* are the antithesis of the expression *לֹא לְהִזְכִּיר יְהוָה* (not to remember in the name of the LORD) in 6:10k.

Briefly, in communication about the Lord, he is described as one with great powers in terms of his acts of creation (he creates the Pleiades and Orion), his act of changing affliction to salvation (as turning the shadow of death into morning), and his act of sending a deluge of destruction (as turning day into night and calling upon the waters of the sea). The Lord described here is not like the gods Sakkuth or Kaiwan who are powerless and must be carried everywhere they go. The Lord can do all things, the implication being that Israel must take the Lord's warning seriously and is obliged to respond positively to his call. Thus the prophet strongly recommends them to seek the Lord and to do so in the following ways: to seek and love good, to hate evil and to establish justice. The prophet also depicts the day of the Lord as full of woe with complete darkness, which is contrary to the expectation of the people.

Observing the relationship between the communication by the Lord and the communication about the Lord (by the prophet and text-immanent author) is helpful in determining the role of the Lord as they are closely related and complementary on many levels. It is evident that the Lord has found out that the sins of the house of Israel are manifold (5:12a–c) and, consequently, many warnings in the form of depopulation (5:3b–f), lamentation (5:16b–17b), annihilation (6:11b–12d) and invasion (6:14a–f) are directed against them. Even though the prophet does not mention the consequences of any of these divine verdicts, he emphasizes in the communication about the Lord that these warnings must be taken seriously. Amid the many warnings announced, the Lord invites the house of Israel very personally and passionately to seek him and to live (5:4b–c) and advises them not to seek Bethel, Gilgal or Beersheba (5:5a–d). Interestingly, the prophet employs the same vocabulary as in the communication by the Lord, and encourages the house of Israel to seek the Lord and live (5:6a–b). By despising Israel's varied and numerous religious practices (5:21a–23b), the Lord tells that what is required is more than mere religious observance: there is a burning need to practise justice and righteousness (5:24a–b).³⁷⁹ The prophet also

³⁷⁹ McKeating remarks that for the Israelite righteousness has a wider meaning than only justice or rectitude. It involves benevolence and kindness towards the weak, to protect them and vindicate the innocent. McKeating, *The books of Amos*, 42. Heschel, *The Prophets*, 201, "righteousness goes beyond justice. Justice is strict and

makes accusations against the house of Israel for turning justice into poison and casting down righteousness (5:7a–b, 10a–d, 11b–c, 12d–f; 6:12c–d). In sum, both the communication by the Lord and the communication about the Lord are complementary and emphatically express that the divine judgement is imminent but, nevertheless, that the Lord wants the house of Israel to seek him and to live.

exact, giving each person his due. Righteousness implies benevolence, kindness, generosity ... righteousness is associated with a burning compassion for the oppressed.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

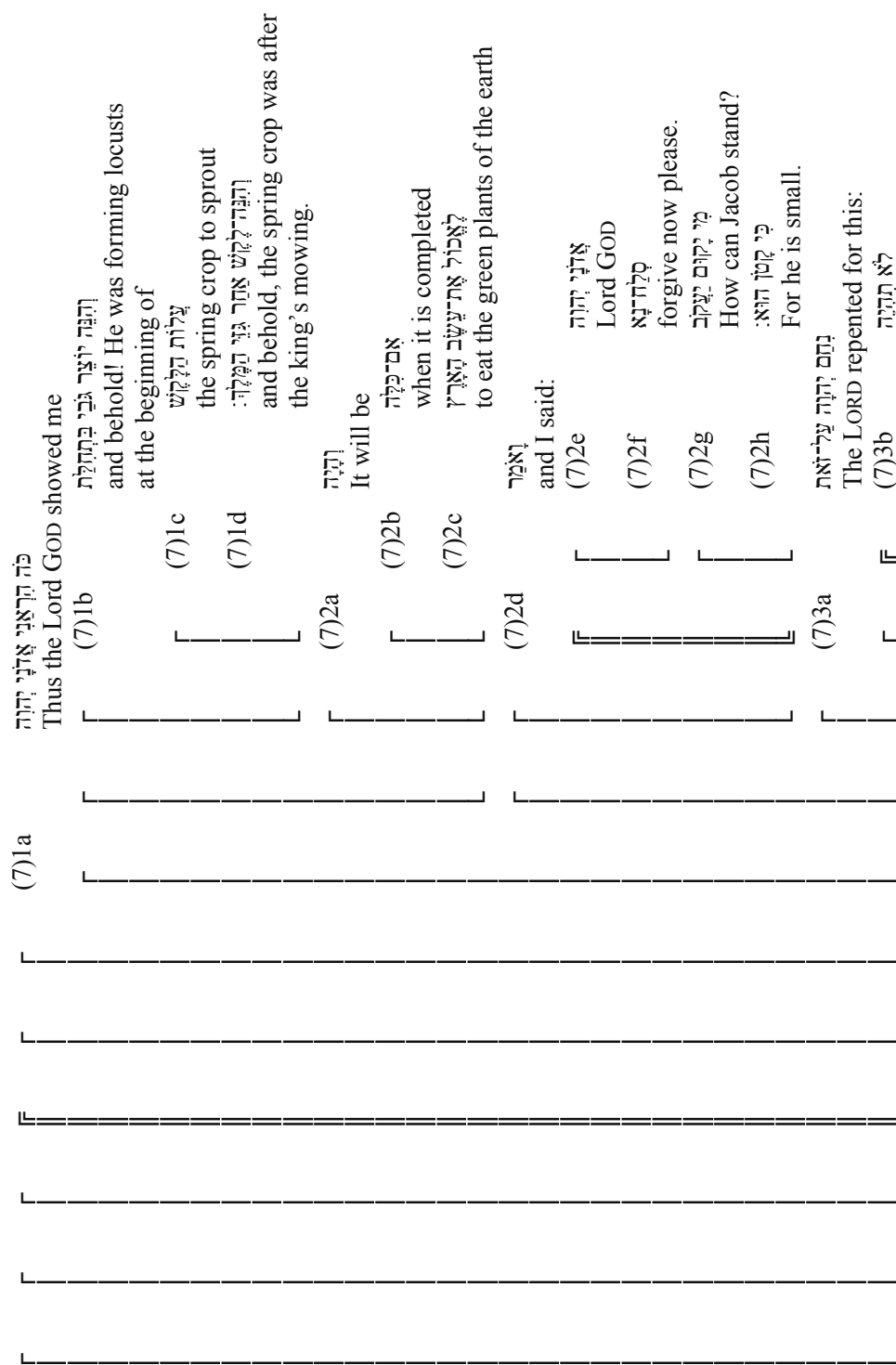
AMOS 7:1–9:15

JUDGEMENT AND RESTORATION

The last three chapters in the book of Amos are primarily an account of five visions received by the prophet Amos (7:1a–9:4), each containing divine judgements made against Israel. Even though in the first two visions the Lord relents from sending locusts (7:3a–c), and then fire (7:6a–c) upon Israel, he subsequently withdraws from that decision not to inflict punishments, firmly declaring that never again will he pardon them (7:8h–i and 8:2h–i). The reasons for the punishments are enunciated in the prophetic speech in 8:4a–14f. The narration of the Amaziah–Amos confrontation, coming between the third and fourth visions, introduces the egotistical high priest of Bethel, Amaziah, who attempts to intimidate Amos, the chosen prophet of the Lord, into rejecting the command of the Lord himself. In relation to the people of Israel, Amaziah's conspiracy against Amos (7:10a–17f), the oppression of the most vulnerable (8:4b–c, 6a–b), hypocritical behaviour – religious observance and commercial enterprise – (8:5b–e), falsely obtaining money through deception (8:5b–h), and the worship of false gods (8:14a–g) are listed among their major transgressions and the reasons for the resultant punishments. Nevertheless, the final part of the book sees the return of the Lord's favour upon Israel (9:11a–15d). The promise is that, despite Israel's repeated shows of unfaithfulness, the Lord will build up a new Israel. Promises of restoration, in place of talk of destruction, enhance the final verses of the book. The intention behind the proclamations of punishments is to bring about repentance and conversion, not annihilation. At the end of Amos' prophecy, which contains so many dire warnings, lies a message of hope.

7.1 TEXT-SYNTAX: AMOS 7:1–9:15

7.1.1 Diagram



[illegible]

		וַיִּהְיֶה אֲדֹנָי נֹצֵב עַל־חוֹמַת אֲדָמָה and behold! the Lord was standing upon a wall [made by] a plumb-line וַיִּקְדֹּי אֲדָמָה: and a plumb-line in his hand.
(7)7b		
(7)7c		
	(7)8a	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי And the LORD asked me,
	(7)8b	מָה־אַתָּה רֹאֶה what do you see
	(7)8c	עָמוֹס Amos?
	(7)8d	וַאֲנִי And I said:
	(7)8e	אֲדָמָה a plumb-line.
	(7)8f	וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדָמָה And the LORD said:
	(7)8g	הִנְנִי שָׂם אֲדָמָה בְּקֶרֶב עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל behold! I set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel.
	(7)8h	לֹא־אֹסִיף עוֹד I will no longer
	(7)8i	עֲבוֹר לוֹ: pass over it.
	(7)9a	וַיִּשְׁמְנוּ בָּמֹת יִשְׁחָק High places of Isaac will be desolated
	(7)9b	וַיִּקְדְּדוּ־שֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה and the sanctuaries of Israel will be laid waste.
	(7)9c	וְקָמְתִי עַל־בֵּית יִרְבֹּעָם בְּתָרְבִּי: I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

(7)10a								
(7)10b								
(7)12a								

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶמְצִיָּה בֶן־יִתְרָאֵל אֶל־יִרְבֹּעַם מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל
Then Amaziah, priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, the King of Israel,

לֵאמֹר

saying:

(7)10c

קִשָּׁר עָלֶיךָ עֲמוֹס בְּקֶרֶב בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
Amos has conspired against you
in the midst of the house of Israel.

(7)10d

לֹא־תוּכַל הָאָרֶץ

The land is not able

(7)10e

לְהִכִּיל אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרַי:

to bear all his words.

(7)11a

כִּי־כִהָ אָמַר עֲמוֹס

For thus Amos said:

(7)11b

בְּתוֹרֵב יָמוּת יְרֻבָּעַם

Jeroboam will die by the sword,

(7)11c

וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל גָּלוּהָ יִגְלֶה מִעַל אֶדְמוֹתוֹ:

and Israel will certainly go into exile from its land.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶמְצִיָּה אֶל־עֲמוֹס

Then Amaziah said to Amos:

(7)12b

הֲזֵה

seer

(7)12c

לֵךְ

go

(7)12d

בָּרוּחַ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה

flee, for you, to the land of Judah

(7)12e

וְאָכַל־לֶחֶם לָחֶם

and eat bread there

(7)12f

וְשָׁם תִּנָּבֵא:

and there you can prophesy.

(7)13a

וְכִיתִּיתָ־אֵל לֹא־תוֹסִיף עוֹד

But in Bethel, no way you ever add

(7)13b

לְהִנָּבֵא

to prophesy.

	(7)13c	כִּי מְקוֹן שַׁמְעָד הוּא For this is the sanctuary of the King
	(7)13d	וּבֵית מְקוֹלָהּ הוּא: and this is the house of the kingdom.
	(7)14a	וַיַּעַן עָמוֹס Then Amos replied
	(7)14b	וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-אַמְצִיָּה and he said to Amaziah:
	(7)14c	לֹא-נָבִיא אֲנִי I am not a prophet
	(7)14d	וְלֹא בֶן-נָבִיא אֲנִי and I am not a son of a prophet.
	(7)14e	כִּי-בוֹקֵר אֲנִי For I am a cattle-raiser
	(7)14f	וּבוֹלֵם שִׂקְמָתִים: and a gatherer of sycamore figs.
	(7)15a	וַיִּקְחוּנִי יְהוָה מֵאַחֲרַי הַצֹּאן And the LORD took me from behind the flock.
	(7)15b	וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה And the LORD said to me:
	(7)15c	גֵּזְךָ go,
	(7)15d	הַנְּבִיאָה אֶל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל: prophesy to my people Israel.
	(7)16a	וַעֲתָה שָׁמַע דְּבַר-יְהוָה Well then, hear the word of the LORD:
	(7)16b	אַתָּה אָמַר you constantly say:
	(7)16c	לֹא תִנְבֵּא עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל you do not prophesy against Israel
	(7)16d	וְלֹא תִסְוֶה עַל-בֵּית יִשְׁהָק; and do not speak

				(8)2e	בָּלוֹב קִיץ a basket of summer fruit.
				(8)2f	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי Then the LORD said to me:
				(8)2g	כָּא הַקֵּץ אֶל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל the end has come upon my people Israel
				(8)2h	לֹא-אֶסְרֶה עוֹד I will no longer
				(8)2i	עֲבוֹר לוֹ: pass over it.
				(8)3a	וְהִלְלוּ שִׁירֹת הַיָּקֵל בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא The songs of the palace shall become wailings in that day,
				(8)3b	נֹאם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה utterance of the Lord GOD.
				(8)3c	רַב הַפָּגֹר The corpses will be many
				(8)3d	בְּכָל-מָקוֹם הַשָּׂלִיךְ thrown down in every place.
				(8)3e	הָסִים: Hush!
				(8)4a	שְׁמַעוּ-זֹאת Hear this,
				(8)4b	הַשֹּׁאֲפִים אֶבְיֹן you who trample the needy
				(8)4c	וְלִשְׁבִּית עֲגִי-אֶרֶץ: and cause to destroy the poor of the earth,
				(8)5a	לֵאמֹר saying:
				(8)5b	כִּתִּי יַעֲבֹר הַחֹדֶשׁ when will the new moon be gone
				(8)5c	וְנִשְׁבִּירָה שָׁמֶר

(8)5d	and we may sell grain, וְהַשְׁבַּת
(8)5e	and the Sabbath וְהַמִּקְדָּשׁ־יָבֵר that we may open corn?
(8)5f	לְהַקְטִין אֵיפָה to make the ephah small
(8)5g	וְלַהֲגִדִּיל שֶׁקֶל and the shekel great
(8)5h	וְלַעֲוֹת בְּאֵזֵי כֶּדֶר: and to falsify the balances [by] deceit
(8)6a	לְקַנּוֹת בְּכֶסֶף דָּלִים that to buy the poor for silver
(8)6b	וְאֶבְיוֹן בְּעֶבֶר נַעֲלִים and the needy for a pair of shoes
(8)6c	וּמִכַּל בֵּר נִשְׁבִּיר: and we will sell the sweepings of the grain.
(8)7a	נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּנֶאֱוָן נִעְקֹב The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
(8)7b	אֲם־אֲשַׁכַּח לְנֹצֵחַ כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם: will I forget any of their glorious deeds?
(8)8a	הֲעַל זֹאת לֹא־תִרְגֹּז הָאָרֶץ Shall not the earth tremble on this account,
(8)8b	וְאֶבֶל will mourn
(8)8c	כָּל־יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ everyone that dwell therein?
(8)8d	וְעָלְתָה כָּאֵר בְּנָה All of it will rise up like the river
(8)8e	וְנִגְרָשָׁה it will be tossed up
(8)8f	וְנִשְׁקָעָה כִּיְאֹר מִצְרָיִם: it will sink down like the river of Egypt.

⌋	(8)9a	וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא It will happen on that day
⌋	(8)9b	נֹאֵם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה utterance of the Lord GOD.
⌋	(8)9c	וְהִבֵּאתִי הַשָּׁמֶשׁ בַּצָּהֳרָיִם I will make the sun to go down at noon.
⌋	(8)9d	וְהִשְׁקַעְתִּי לְאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: I will darken the earth in daylight.
⌋	(8)10a	וְהִפַּכְתִּי הַיַּיִן לְאֵשׁ I will turn your feasts into mourning
⌋	(8)10b	וְכָל־שִׁירֵיכֶם לְקִינָה and all your songs into lamentation.
⌋	(8)10c	וְהִעֲלֵיתִי עַל־כָּל־קְהָלֵי שָׂן I will bring sackcloth on all loins
⌋	(8)10d	וְעַל־כָּל־רֹאשׁ קָרְחָה and baldness on every head.
(8)10e		וְשָׁמַתִּיךָ בְּאֶמְקֵל יְהוִד I will make it like the mourning for an only [son]
(8)10f		וְאַחֲרֵיהֶנּוּ בַיּוֹם הַהוּא: and the end of it like a bitter day.
⌋	(8)11a	הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים Behold, the days are about to come
⌋	(8)11b	נֹאֵם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה says the Lord GOD.
⌋	(8)11c	וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ I will send a famine on the earth
⌋	(8)11d	לֹא־רָעָב לֶחֶם not a famine of bread
⌋	(8)11e	וְלֹא־צָמָא לַמַּיִם and not a thirst for water
(8)11f		כִּי אִם־לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶת דְּבָרֵי יְהוִה: but of hearing the words of the LORD.
⌋	(8)12a	וְנָעֻז מְיָד עַד־יָדֵינוּ and we will be weary from hand to hand

		(8)12b	They shall stagger from sea to sea וּמִצָּפוֹן וְעַד-מִזְרוֹחַ יִשְׁתָּכְחוּ and from the north even to the east they shall run to and fro
		(8)12c	לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת-יְרֵיבוֹתֶיהָ to seek the word of the LORD, but will not find [it].
		(8)12d	וְלֹא יִמָּצֵא: In that day, the beautiful young women and the young men will faint in thirst.
	(8)13a		הַנִּשְׁכָּחִים בְּאַשְׁמַת שְׂמֵרוֹן They who swear by the guilt of Samaria, (8)14b they will say:
	(8)14a		וְהֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ your Gods live (8)14d דָּן Dan
			(8)14e וְהֵי דָרַךְ בְּאֶרֶץ-שֹׁבַע and the way Beersheba lives. (8)14f וְנָפְלוּ They will fall (8)14g וְלֹא-יָקֻמוּ עוֹד: and they will not rise again.
(9)1a			רָאִיתִי אֶת-אֲדֹנָי I saw the Lord
(9)1b			נִצָּב עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ standing upon the altar.
(9)1c			וַיֹּאמֶר And he said:
		(9)1d	הֵךְ הַכְפָּתוֹר smite the capital

			(9)1e	וַיִּרְעֹשׁוּ הַסְּפִיּוֹת that the thresholds will shake.
		(9)1f		וַיִּצְעַם בְּרֹאשׁ גָּלִים And to shatter them on the head of all of them.
	(9)1g			וְאַתְּ יִהְיֶה בְּתוֹכָם אֶחָד I will kill the remainder of them with the sword
		(9)1h		לֹא־יָנוּס לָהֶם גֵּם the fugitive will not flee to them
		(9)1i		וְלֹא־יִפְלֹט לָהֶם פְּלִיטָה and the fugitive cannot bring safety to themselves.
			(9)2a	אִם־יִחְדְּרוּ בְּשֹׂאֵל If they dig into Sheol
			(9)2b	מִשָּׁם יָדִי תִקְחוּם from there my hand will
			(9)2c	הוֹצִיָם haul them out
			(9)2d	וְאִם־יַעֲלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם and if they climb up to heaven מִשָּׁם אֲרִידֵם from there I will bring them down.
			(9)3a	וְאִם־יִתְבָּאוּ בְּרֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל And if they may hide themselves in the top of Carmel
			(9)3b	מִשָּׁם אֶתְפֹּשׂ from there I will
			(9)3c	אֶחְדָּשׁ search out
			(9)3d	וְאִם־יִסְתְּרוּ מִנְּגִידַי בְּקַרְקָע הַיָּם and I will take them. And if they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea

		(9)3e	מִשָּׁם אֲצַוְהָ אוֹת הַבְּקָשׁ from there I will command the serpent וְנִשְׁכָּם: and it will bite them.
		(9)3f	וְאִם-יֵלְכוּ בְּשָׂכְרִי לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם And if they go into captivity before their enemies
	(9)4a	(9)4b	מִשָּׁם אֲצַוְהָ אוֹת הַחֶרֶב from there I will command the sword
		(9)4c	וְהָרַגְתֶּם וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁכַּח and it shall kill them.
(9)4d	וְאֵלֶי יִסָּד וְעֵינִי עַל-עֵינֵיהֶם לֹא לוֹטוּבָה: I will set my eye upon them for evil and not for good.		
(9)5a	The Lord GOD of hosts, ה' הַזֶּה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת he who touches the earth וְהָיָה וְהָיָה and it melts,		
	(9)5b	(9)5d	וְאָבְלוּ will lament
	(9)5c	(9)5e	כָּל-יוֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ everyone dwells in it,
		(9)5f	וְעָלְתָה בִּיאָר קָלָה all of it will rise like the river
		(9)5g	וְשָׁקַע כִּיָּאר מִצְרַיִם: will sink like the river of Egypt.
	(9)6a		הַבוֹנֶה בְּשָׁמַיִם מַעְלוֹתָיו He who builds his stairs in the heavens
	(9)6b		וְאַגְדָּתוֹ עַל-אֲרָץ יִסָּדָהּ and has found his vault upon the earth.
	(9)6c		הַקֹּרֵן לַמַּיִם הַיָּבֵים

[illegible]

[illegible]

			utterance of the LORD, וְנִגַּשׁ חֹרֶשׁ בְּקֶצֶר	(9)13c
			that the one who ploughs shall overtake the one who reaps	
			וְדֹרֶךְ עֹבְדִים בְּמִשְׁךְ הַנָּזֶרַע	(9)13d
			and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed	
			וְהַטִּיפוּ הַהָרִים עֲסִים	(9)13e
			and the mountains shall drop sweet wine	
			וְכָל-הַהֲבָעוֹת תִּתְמוּגְגָהּ:	(9)13f
			and all the hills shall melt.	
		(9)14a	וְשִׁבְתִּי אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל	
			I will turn the captivity of my people Israel	
		(9)14b	וְיָבִנוּ עָרִים וְשִׁמּוֹת	
			and they shall rebuild the ruined cities	
		(9)14c	וְיָשְׁבוּ	
			and they shall inhabit [them],	
		(9)14d	וְנָטְעוּ כְרָמִים	
			they shall plant vineyards	
		(9)14e	וְשָׁתוּ אֶת-יַיִנָּם	
			and they shall drink their wine	
		(9)14f	וְעָשׂוּ גִבּוֹת	
			they shall also make gardens	
		(9)14g	וְאָכְלוּ אֶת-פְּרִיָתָם:	
			and eat their fruit.	
		(9)15a	וְנָטַעְתִּים עַל-אֶרֶץ מָדָם	
			I will plant them upon their land,	
		(9)15b	וְלֹא יִנָּחְשׁוּ עוֹד מַעַל אֶדְמָתָם	
			and they shall no more be plucked up	
			out of their land	
		(9)15c	אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם	
			which I have given them	
		(9)15d	אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ:	
			said the LORD your God.	

7.1.2 Analysis

The syntactic units within Amos 7:1–9:15 are outlined in the table below.

sub-minor units	minor units	bigger units	major units
----- 7:1b–2c 7:2d–3c	7:1a 7:1b–3c	7:1a–3c	7:1a–9c
----- 7:4b–f 7:5a–6c	7:4a–f 7:4b–6c	7:4a–6c	
----- 7:7b–c 7:8a–e 7:8f–9c	7:7a 7:7b–9c	7:7a–9c	
----- 7:10a 7:10b–11c	7:10a 7:10b–11c	7:10a–11c	
----- 7:14a–15d 7:16a–17f	7:12a–13d 7:14a–17f	7:12a–17f	
----- 8:1a 8:1b 8:2a–3b 8:3c–e	8:1a 8:1b 8:2a–3b 8:3c–e	8:1a–3e	8:1a–9:4d
----- 8:7a–9b 8:9c–10f 8:11a–12d 8:13a–14g	8:4b–6c 8:7a–14g	8:4a–14g	
----- 9:1a–b 9:1c–4d	9:1a–b 9:1c–4d	9:1a–4d	
----- 9:5a 9:5b–6d 9:6e	9:5a 9:5b–6d 9:6e	9:5a–6e	
----- 9:8a 9:8b–12d 9:9a–12d 9:13a–f 9:14a–15d	9:7a–c 9:7d–f 9:8a–12d 9:13a–15d	9:7a–f 9:8a–15d	9:5a–15d

The book of Amos contains five visions in all, with the first, second and third being arranged as units 7:1a–3c, 7:4a–6c and 7:7a–9c respectively, and which together form 7:1a–9c, the first major unit. All three visions exhibit grammatical similarities, and remarkable among these is the structural parallelism between the first and the second.³⁸⁰ The table below illustrates these similarities.

similarities	first vision (7:1a–3c)	second vision (7:4a–6c)	third vision (7:7a–9c)
introductory clause	כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה (<i>thus the Lord GOD showed me</i> , 7:1a)	כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה (<i>thus the Lord GOD showed me</i> , 7:4a)	כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי (<i>thus he showed me</i> , 7:7a)
<i>futurum instans</i>	יְהוָה + יוֹצֵר (7:1b)	יְהוָה + קָרָא (7:4b)	יְהוָה + נָצַב (7:7b)
<i>Sproßerzählung</i>	אָמַר (7:2d)	וַתֹּאכַל (7:4e), אָמַר (7:5a)	וַיֹּאמֶר (7:8a), אָמַר (7:8d), וַיֹּאמֶר (7:8f)
dialogue	‘I’-figure–Lord God (7:2d–3c)	‘I’-figure–Lord God (7:5a–6c)	Lord–Amos (7:8a–9c)
interrogative sentence	מִי יָקוּם יַעֲקֹב כִּי קָטָן הוּא (<i>how can Jacob stand? for he is small</i>) (7:2g–h)	מִי יָקוּם יַעֲקֹב כִּי קָטָן הוּא (<i>how can Jacob stand? for he is small</i>) (7:5d–e)	-----
response	לֹא תִהְיֶה (<i>it shall not be</i>) (7:3b)	גַּם־הִיא לֹא תִהְיֶה (<i>it also shall not be</i>) (7:6b)	-----
concluding formula	אָמַר יְהוָה (<i>said the LORD</i>) (7:3c)	אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (<i>said the Lord GOD</i>) (7:6c)	-----

³⁸⁰ The parallelism, a feature of the first and second visions is widely discussed in the various commentaries and other literary studies. For instance, see Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 745, remarks that the second vision is a twin of the first; Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*, 159, comments that the first and second are rigorously parallel from beginning to end.

- All three visions recorded in the first major unit have similar opening markers כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה (*thus the Lord GOD showed me*) in 7:1a and 4a and כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי (*thus he showed me*) in 7:7a. The *qatal*-form with the first person suffix הִרְאֵנִי (*showed me*)³⁸¹ attached to it is notable and confirm that the visions have been received from the Lord.³⁸²
- All the three introductory markers are followed by a *futurum instans*, a הֵנָּה + *participle* construction suggesting something is about to happen, namely, הֵנָּה + יוֹצֵר in 7:1b, הֵנָּה + קָרָא in 7:4b and הֵנָּה + נָצַב in 7:7b.
- The verbs in *wayyiqtol*-forms in 7:2d, 4e, 5a, 8a, 8d and 8f form a *Sproßerzählung*. The *wayyiqtol*-form in 7:2d is a continuation of the *qatal*-form in 7:1a, the *wayyiqtol*-forms in 7:4e, 5a are an extension of the *qatal*-form in 7:4a and the *wayyiqtol*-forms in 7:8a, 7:8d and 7:8f are an extension of the *qatal*-form in 7:7a.
- Each of the הֵנָּה clauses is followed by a vision (7:1b–2c, 4b–f, 7b–c) and a dialogue between an ‘I’-figure and the Lord. However, a slight change occurs in the third vision, namely, the ‘I’-figure is revealed to be Amos.
- An identical interrogative sentence (with the same structure and vocabulary) by an ‘I’-figure is found in the first two visions (7:2g–h, 5d–e),³⁸³ but not in the third.
- The response of the Lord to the interrogation (7:3a–b and 6a–b) is the same in both case.
- A concluding divine speech formula is a characterization of the first two visions (7:3c, 6c), however the third vision has no such marking.³⁸⁴

The first three visions are briefly interrupted by the narrative *wayyiqtol* in 7:10a where, however, the *wayyiqtol*-form וַיִּשְׁלַח (*sent*) is not a *Sproßerzählung*. It is not a continuation but an elaboration of the *wayyiqtol*-forms in the first three visions (7:1a–9c). This implies

³⁸¹ The accounts of all five visions are introduced in the first person. See Marc Zvi Brettler, “Redaction, History, and Redaction-History of Amos in Recent Scholarship,” in Kelle and Moore, *Israel’s Prophets and Israel’s Past*, 101.

³⁸² These visions emanate from the Lord, as confirmed by the *hiphil*-form of רָאָה (cf. Jer 24:1 and Zech 3:1). See Mark J. Boda, *Exploring Zechariah, Volume 2: The Development and Role of Biblical Traditions in Zechariah*, ANEM 17 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 94.

³⁸³ Beckman, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax*, 52, mentions that מַה is used as an interrogative adverb in Amos 7:2 and 7:5.

³⁸⁴ Meier, *Speaking of Speaking*, 228.

that 7:10a–17f forms the second major unit where the Amaziah–Amos encounter is described using *wayyiqtol*-forms.³⁸⁵ This narrative section contains the three distinct, yet connected, direct speech units 7:10b–11c, 7:12a–13d and 7:14a–17f.

The first direct speech in 7:10b–11c, which contains the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר preceded by the preposition לְ, serves as an introduction to the communication of Amaziah. Amaziah's words to Jeroboam follow in 7:10c–11c. It is an embedded speech containing an alleged quotation of Amos by Amaziah (7:11b–c) with an introduction כִּי־כֹה אָמַר עָמוֹס (*for thus Amos said*) in 7:11a. The second direct speech recorded in 7:12a–13d is also a speech of Amaziah. However, it is marked as a new direct speech because of the presence of a new *verbum dicendi* in *wayyiqtol*-form (וַיֹּאמֶר, *said*) in 7:12a. In this direct speech, the fact that Amaziah addresses Amos as a seer is attested by the use of the vocative הִנֵּה in 7:12b. The third and final direct speech recorded in this unit, which is one by Amos to Amaziah, occurs in 7:14a–17f. The introductory speech marker, the *verbum dicendi* in *wayyiqtol*-form (וַיֹּאמֶר, *said*) is identical to that in 7:12a.

The direct speech in 7:14c–17f can be divided into two parts, 7:14c–15d and 16a–17f, each containing an embedded direct speech, 7:15c–d and 16b–17f, which are not, however, on the same level. The direct speech in 7:15c–d is a speech of the Lord (*and the LORD said to me*). It is introduced by the *verbum dicendi* וַיֹּאמֶר in *wayyiqtol*-form, a *Sproßerzählung* (7:15b). On the contrary, in 7:16b–17f it is not the Lord who is speaking; here the Lord is presented in the third person form וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע דְּבַר־יְהוָה (*well then, hear the word of the LORD*) with the verb in the imperative form. It is interesting to note two opposing embedded speeches, the first by Amaziah (7:16c–d) and then one by the Lord (7:17b–f), attested by the words of Amos, אָתָּה אָמַר (*you constantly say*, 7:16b) and לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה (*therefore, the LORD said thus*, 7:17a) respectively.

³⁸⁵ For a discussion on the narrative in Amos 7:10–17, see Peter R. Ackroyd, “A Judgment Narrative between Kings and Chronicles? An Approach to Amos 7:9–17,” in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology*, ed. G. W. Coats and Burke O. Long (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 71–87.

Based upon these observations, the syntactic elements found in 7:10a–17f are outlined as follows:

narration	direct speech + <i>verbum dicendi</i>		embedded direct speech + <i>verbum dicendi</i>		embedded direct speech within embedded direct speech + <i>verbum dicendi</i>	
וַיִּשְׁלַח (7:10a) וַיֹּאמֶר (7:12a)	7:10c–11c	לֵאמֹר (saying) 7:10b	7:11b–c	אָמַר (he said) 7:11a	7:16c–d	אָמַר (saying) 7:16b
וַיַּעַן (7:14a) וַיֹּאמֶר (7:14b) וַיֹּאמֶר (7:15b)	7:12b–13d	וַיֹּאמֶר (he said) 7:12a	7:15c–d	וַיֹּאמֶר (he said) 7:15b		7:17b–f אָמַר (he said) 7:17a
	7:14c–17f	וַיֹּאמֶר (he said) 7:14b	7:16b–17f	שָׁמַע (hear) 7:16a		

The *qatal* construction in 8:1a כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (*thus the Lord GOD showed me*) heralds the beginning of a new unit that extends to 9:4d, the third major unit. This direct speech unit can be divided into three parts: the first and final parts 8:1a–3e, and 9:1a–4d, being accounts of the fourth and fifth visions respectively, while 8:4a–14g is a prophetic invitation to listen to the word of the Lord.

The first part 8:1a–3e, begins with the formula כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, a formula already used in 7:1a (first vision), 7:4a (second vision) and 7:7a (third vision). This is an indicator that the fourth vision begins in 8:1a. Then, as in the first, second and third visions, it is followed by a הִנֵּה clause. However, the dialogue within the vision, which is similar to, and in parts identical to that in the third vision, differs from that in the first and second visions.³⁸⁶ The conversation is commenced, not by the ‘I’-figure as in the first and second visions, but by

³⁸⁶ Repeated verbatim are מָה־אָמַר רָאָה עָמוֹס (7:8b–c (third vision) and 8:2b–c (fourth vision)) and לֹא־אֹסִיר עוֹד (7:8h–i (third vision) and 8:2h–i (fourth vision)). See Paul R. Noble, “Amos and Amaziah in Context: Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches to Amos 7–8,” *CBQ* 60 (1998): 427. See also Boda, *Exploring Zechariah, Volume 2*, 94. In these two visions, the Lord invites the prophet to respond to the question רָאָה מָה־אָמַר (cf. Jer 1:11, 13; 24:3; cf. also Zech 4:2a; 5:2a).

the Lord. The introduction to the embedded speech וַיֹּאמֶר (*and he said*) in 8:2a is in *wayyiqtol*-form and is a *Sproßerzählung*. Two further *Sproßerzählungen* occur in 8:2d and 8:2f. The *wayyiqtol*-form וַיֹּאמֶר in 8:2f is, just as in 8:2a, a *he-narration* while the verb וַיֹּאמֶר (*and I said*) in 8:2d is an *I-narration*. The occurrence of the verbless divine speech formula (נָאֻם אֶדְנִי יְהוָה) in 8:3b, though not in the same tense as the formulas in the first and second visions (אָמַר יְהוָה in 7:3c and אָמַר אֶדְנִי יְהוָה in 7:6c), establishes a connection with them. The third vision has no such formula.

8:1a–3e can be summarized as follows:

- The *qatal* construction (כֹּה הָרְאֵנִי אֶדְנִי יְהוָה) of the opening marker corresponds to that of the first, second and third vision. The first person suffix attached to the *qatal*-form (הָרְאֵנִי) serves to confirm it as a vision.
- A macro syntactic marker הִנֵּה immediately follows the *qatal* clause.
- A *Sproßerzählung* marked by *wayyiqtol*-forms occurs in 8:2a (וַיֹּאמֶר), 8:2d (וַאֲמַר) and 8:2f (וַיֹּאמֶר).
- Three embedded direct speeches are found: (i) 8:2b–c and (ii) 8:2g–3a, both introduced by the discursive verb וַיֹּאמֶר and (iii) 8:2e, introduced by וַאֲמַר.
- The expression בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא (*on that day*) indicates the occurrence of a temporal phrase (8:3a).

Though the vision ends in 8:3e, the imperative verbal form in 8:4a extends the direct speech begun in 8:1a. The second part 8:4a–14g is a prophetic speech set between the fourth and fifth visions. It features many embedded direct speeches, the first of which is in 8:5b–6c, and is introduced by the *verbum dicendi* (לֵאמֹר) in 8:5a. The speech starts with the interrogative particle (מָתִי) and the main communication is built upon verbs in *yiqtol*-forms (נִשְׁבַּר, וְנִשְׁבְּרָה, וְנִשְׁבְּרָה, וְנִשְׁבְּרָה) and a number of infinitive construct verbal forms (הִגְדִּיל, הִקְטִין, קָנוּ, עָוָה). Two of the four verbs in *yiqtol*-forms are cohortative. A second embedded speech, which occurs in 8:7a–9b, is a direct solemn speech of the Lord. The discursive verb נִשְׁבַּע marks the introduction to the direct speech. The oath of the Lord contains the rhetorical question הֲעַל זֹאת לֹא-תִרְגַּז הָאָרֶץ (*shall not the earth tremble on this account*) in 8:8a, the temporal phrase וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא (*it will happen on that day*) in 8:9a and a series of *w^eqatal*

verbal forms, וְאָבַל in 8:8b, וְעָלְתָה in 8:8d, וְנִגְרָשָׁה in 8:8e, וְנִשְׁקָעָה in 8:8f and וְהָיָה in 8:9a. The divine speech formula וְנָאם אֲדֹנָיִי יְהוָה ends the speech in 8:9b and hence a third embedded speech occurs in 8:9c–10f. Nevertheless, it is the continuation of the speech started in 8:7b. A same *w^eqatal* verbal perspective continues to communicate actions in sequence. It is worth noting that all the verbs in *w^eqatal*-forms are in first person forms (וְהִבֵּאתִי, וְהִשְׁכַּתִּי, וְהִפְכַּתִּי, וְהִעֲלִיתִי and וְשַׁמְתִּיהָ) with the Lord's personal intervention adding emphasis to the words of warning.³⁸⁷ The appearance of the new direct speech marker הִנֵּה in 8:11a, indicates that the previous embedded speech has ended in 8:10f. The temporal clause הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים (*behold, the days are about to come*) in 8:11a is immediately followed by the conclusion marker וְנָאם אֲדֹנָיִי יְהוָה (*says the Lord GOD*) in 8:11b. Yet another embedded speech begins in 8:11c, but does not, however, continue to 8:11d–12d, where there is a shift from first person form (וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי) to third person (וְדִבְרֵי יְהוָה). The temporal phrase (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא), which occurs in 8:13a, is followed by the final embedded speech in 8:14c–e, which is introduced by the *verbum dicendi* in *w^eqatal*-form (וְאָמַרְוּ) in 8:14b.

The syntactic observations on the second part (8:4a–14g) can be summarized as follows:

- Unit 8:4a–14g is placed between the fourth and fifth visions.
- It includes many embedded direct speeches: (i) 8:5b–6c: *verbum dicendi* לֵאמֹר in 8:5a, (ii) 8:7a–9b: *verbum dicendi* וְנִשְׁבַּע in 8:7a, (iii) 8:9c–10f: no *verbum dicendi*; however, it is remarkable for the continued occurrence of five first person verbs in *w^eqatal*-form, (iv) 8:11a: no *verbum dicendi*; direct speech marker הִנֵּה, (v) 8:11c: no *verbum dicendi*; but a first person verb in *w^eqatal*-form, (vi) 8:14c–e: *verbum dicendi* וְאָמַרְוּ in 8:14b.
- Occurrences of two interrogative particles: מָתִי in 8:5b, and הָ in 8:8a.
- Two concluding formulas וְנָאם אֲדֹנָיִי יְהוָה in 8:9b and in 8:11b attesting to the embedded speeches.
- Occurrences of three temporal phrases: וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא in 8:9a, הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים in 8:11a and בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא in 8:13a.

³⁸⁷ Alison Lo, “Remnant Motif in Amos, Micah and Zephaniah,” in Grant, Lo and Wenham, *A God of Faithfulness*, 134.

The third part, 9:1a–4d, records a vision, as attested by the introductory marker רָאִיתִי אֶת־אֲדֹנָי (I saw the Lord) in 9:1a. Though the opening marker is different in form from the introductory marker in the first four visions, all five have the same root, the verb רָאָה (to see), thus confirming 9:1a–4d to be a vision. Unlike the other visions, the participle clause (הָיָה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ) immediately following is without the discursive particle הֵנָּה. The *Sproßerzählung* וַיֹּאמֶר occurs in 9:1c and functions as a *verbum dicendi* to the embedded speech in 9:1d–4d. The embedded speech in this vision is not in dialogue form, which differentiates it from the previous recorded visions. It is the Lord who delivers this speech, as attested by the *verbum dicendi* וַיֹּאמֶר which takes its subject from clause 9:1a (רָאִיתִי אֶת־אֲדֹנָי). The use of the imperative verb (הָרָה) at the beginning of the Lord's speech makes this vision unique. The communication then follows with a series of verbs in *yiqtol*-forms, namely, וַיִּרְעֶשׂוּ in 9:1e, אֶהְרֹג in 9:1g, יָנוּס in 9:1h, יִמָּלֵט in 9:1i, יִהְיֶה in 9:2a, תִּקְחֶם in 9:2b, יִעָלֻ in 9:2c, אוֹרִידֶם in 9:2d, יִחַבְאוּ in 9:3a, אֶחַפֵּשׂ in 9:3b, יִסְתָּרוּ in 9:3d, אֶצְנֶה in 9:3e, יִלְכוּ in 9:4a and אֶצְנֶה in 9:4b, as well as the infinitive construct (וּבְצַעַם) in 9:1f, and with four *qatal*-forms (וְלִקְחֶתֶם, וּנְשָׁכֶם, וַהֲרַגְתֶּם and וַיִּשְׁמָתִי) in 9:3c, 9:3f, 9:4c and 9:4d respectively. Out of a total of 14 *yiqtol*-forms, six are *x-yiqtol*, where *x* stands for a prepositional phrase. It is interesting to note the two kinds of parallelism within this embedded speech. Clauses 9:2a, 2c, 3a, 3d and 4a are parallel, likewise 9:2b, 2d, 3b, 3e, 4b and 4d. The first kind of parallelism is formed from the joining together of the conjunction אֵם and the *yiqtol*-form. The second type of parallelism is formed from the combination of a preposition מִן attached to the adverb שָׁם followed by a first person *yiqtol*-form. Both types of parallelism are shown in the table below:

parallelism one	parallelism two
אֵם־יִהְיֶה in 9:2a	מִשָּׁם יָדִי תִקְחֶם (9:2b)
אֵם־יִעָלֻ in 9:2c	מִשָּׁם אוֹרִידֶם (9:2d)
אֵם־יִחַבְאוּ in 9:3a	מִשָּׁם אֶחַפֵּשׂ (9:3b)
אֵם־יִסְתָּרוּ in 9:3d	מִשָּׁם אֶצְנֶה in 9:3e
אֵם־יִלְכוּ in 9:4a	מִשָּׁם אֶצְנֶה in 9:4b

The following is a summary of the syntactic elements found in the third part (9:1a–4d):

- The verbal clause רָאִיתִי אֶת־אֲדֹנָי having the verb רָאָה as its root corresponds to the first four visions confirming that the fifth vision commences with it.
- Unlike the other visions, the fifth vision has no הִנֵּה particle.
- A *Sproßerzählung* can be found in 9:1c.
- In contrast to the other visions, the discourse part in the fifth vision is a monologue; the Lord speaks, however there is no rejoinder.
- The occurrence of an embedded speech (9:1d–4d) introduced by וַיֹּאמֶר in 9:1c.
- Examples of parallelism can be found within the embedded speech 9:1d–4d.

The fourth and final major unit 9:5a–15d has three divisions, 9:5a–6e, 9:7a–f and 9:8a–15d.

(i) 9:5a–6e: the initial clause of unit 9:5a–6e is noteworthy, as the divine naming אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה (the Lord GOD of hosts) in 5a is a *casus pendens*. Placed at the beginning of the sentence it is given prominence and is closely associated with what is to follow. The participle verb preceded by a *ḥ relativum* (הַנֹּגֵעַ) in 9:5b confirms the connection to the *casus pendens*. Next comes a *Sproßerzählung* (וַתְּמוֹג), which in turn is followed by a series of verbs in participle form (וּשְׁבִי, הַבֹּנֶה, הַקֵּרֵא), in *w^eqatal*-form (וְעָלְתָה, וְאָבְלוּ), in *qatal*-form (וַיִּשְׁקָעוּ) with a prepositional phrase (עַל־אֶרֶץ), and in *wayyiqtol*-form (וַיִּשְׁפְּכוּ), a *Sproßerzählung*. It is noticeable that all verbs in participle form in 9:5a–6e, with the exception of clause 9:5e, are prefaced with the *ḥ relativum*. This unit, begins with a *casus pendens* and, containing the Tetragrammaton (יְהוָה), ends with an asyndetic nominal clause in 9:6e.

Briefly, the syntactic peculiarities in the first division (9:5a–6e) are:

- Occurrence of a *casus pendens* in 9:5a.
- Occurrence of the *Sproßerzählungen* (וַתְּמוֹג) in 9:5c and (וַיִּשְׁפְּכוּ) in 9:6d.
- A series of verbs in participle form and *w^eqatal*-form describes the Lord.
- The description of the Lord concludes with a nominal expression in asyndetic form, giving it greater emphasis.

(ii) 9:7a–f: the presence of the second person pronoun (אַתָּה), the first person suffix (לִי), the vocative (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) and the concluding divine speech formula (נְאֻם־יְהוָה) initiates a direct speech in 9:7a–f, and distinguishes it from the former unit 9:5a–6e. Nevertheless, the divine speech formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה in 9:7c briefly interrupts the direct speech in 9:7a–f, and in doing so, creates two distinct parts, 9:7a–b and 9:7d–f. Both 9:7a–b and 9:7d–f are interrogative sentences, beginning with same interrogative word הֲ. However, a change to be noted is that the vocative in 9:7b (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) becomes a direct object (אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל) in 9:7d. Both 9:7e and 7f are elliptical clauses, depending on the first person *qatal* verbal form (הָעֲלִיתִי) in 9:7d. The discursive part (9:7a–f) ends in 9:7f due to the presence of a caesura in 9:8a.

The syntactic distinctiveness of the second division (9:7a–f) follows in a concise way:

- It is a direct speech separated into two parts by the formula נְאֻם־יְהוָה.
- Both parts are in the interrogative form and begin with the interrogative word הֲ.
- The presence of the vocative (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) in 9:7b.
- Occurrences of two elliptical clauses, 9:7e and 9:7f.

(iii) 9:8a–15d: the caesura occurs between 9:7a–f and 9:8a–15d due to a change of person. Clause 9:8a הִנֵּה עֵינֵי יְהוָה בַּמְּלָכָה הַחַטָּאָה (*behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom*) contains no first or second person forms. On the contrary, it has a third person noun יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי (Lord GOD) that appears in first person form in 9:7a–f and which continues through 9:8b–15d after the caesura in 9:8a. Despite the third person form, the particle הִנֵּה begins a new direct speech in 9:8a, and the question of where the direct speech, begun in 9:8a, actually ends, remains. The speech formula with second person suffix (אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, *said the LORD your God*) found in 9:15d suggests that the formula is also part of the direct speech. Immediately after the caesura, a pair of first person verbs in 9:8b–c following on from the first person verbs in 9:7a–f, together create an embedded speech within 9:8a–15d. With the phrase אֶתָּה in 9:8b referring back to the phrase בַּמְּלָכָה הַחַטָּאָה in 9:8a (caesura), it becomes clear that the caesura impacts not only what has preceded it in 9:7a–f, but also what is to follow in 9:8b–d. Particular attention is drawn to the placing of the negative particle לֹא before the infinite absolute in the expression לֹא הִשְׁמִיד אֶשְׁמִיד (*I will not utterly destroy*) in 9:8c, which indicates the denial of what was previously announced by

the Lord. This usage is rarely seen in the text. The concluding formula נֹאמַם־יְהוָה occurring in 9:8d indicates the ending in 9:8c of the embedded speech which begins in 9:8b.

9:9a introduces a new embedded speech, one where the conjunction כִּי refers back to 9:8. The particle הִנֵּה and the first person pronoun אֲנִי begin the speech which is continued in 9:9b by a first person verb in *qatal*-form preceded by the conjunction וְ (וְהִנֵּעֹתִי). This is followed then by a series of *yiqtol* verbal forms, namely, יָנוּעַ in 9:9c, יָפֹל in 9:9d and יָמוּתוּ in 9:10a. The *verbum dicendi* אָמְרִים appears in 9:10b, giving rise to a new embedded direct speech (9:10c–e) within the embedded speech, one which ends in 9:10e. The first person *yiqtol* verbal form attached to the temporal phrase (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אָקִים, *on that day I will raise up*) in 9:11a facilitates the continuation of the embedded speech started in 9:9a, to continue through 9:11 and 9:12, with its end in 9:12b being marked by the concluding formula נֹאמַם־יְהוָה in 9:12c.

A temporal phrase along with the discursive element הִנֵּה marks a new, but short embedded speech in 9:13a, with the concluding formula following immediately in 9:13b. The final embedded speech in 9:14a–15c is distinguished by a number of verbs in *w^eqatal*-forms, being: וְשָׁבְתִי (9:14a), וְכָבוֹ (9:14b), וְיָשְׁבוּ (9:14c), וְנָטְעוּ (9:14d), וְשָׁתוּ (9:14e), וְעָשׂוּ (9:14f), וְאָכְלוּ (9:14g), and וְנִטְעָתִים (9:15a). These are followed by the occurrence of a *yiqtol*-form (יִנְתָּשׁוּ) in 9:15b and a *qatal*-form (נִתְתִּי) in 9:15c. Due to the addition of a second person plural noun with suffix, the expression אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ with the *verbum dicendi* אָמַר in 9:15d is not included in the embedded speech in 9:14a–15c. However, it marks the end of the direct speech started in 9:8a.

The remarkable syntactic factors within the third division 9:8a–15d are summarized as:

- A caesura in 9:8a.
- The position of לֹא before the absolute rather than the finite verb in 9:8c.
- The occurrences of the discursive particle הִנֵּה in 9:9a and 9:13a.
- Attestation of a number of embedded direct speeches: (i) 9:8b–c, (ii) 9:9a–12b, (iii) 9:13a and (iv) 9:14a–15c.
- Occurrence of an embedded direct speech (9:10c–e), within the embedded speech.

- Attestation of three concluding formulas within the embedded speeches: נָאֻם־יְהוָה in 9:12c and 13b, and אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ in 9:15d.
- Occurrences of two temporal phrases: בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אָקִים in 9:11a, and בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא in 9:13a.
- The concluding speech formula in 9:15d with the second person suffix אֱלֹהֵיךָ is significant.

7.1.3 Summary

- The first four visions have a similar introductory formula: כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה. Though the introductory formula is different in the fifth vision, it maintains the connection to the other four through the same root verb רָאָה.
- The first four visions have *futurum instans*, a הֵנָּה + participle construction while the fifth vision serves to express the immediacy of what is about to happen.
- Each of the five visions includes a sighting and dialogue.
- A significant parallelism formed by the combination of the conjunction אֵם and the preposition מִן attached to the adverb שָׁם attracts much attention in the fifth vision (9:2a–4b).
- Unit 7:10a–17f is a narration, attested by the narrative wayyiqtol (וַיִּשְׁלַח) in 7:10a.
- Noteworthy are the occurrences of syntactic factors like *casus pendens*, *Sproßerzählung*, *futurum instans* and *caesura* in 7:1–9:15.

Having completed the syntactic analysis of all the four major units, the following part aims to undertake the semantic analysis of 7:1–9:15 in accordance with its syntactic unit divisions.

7.2 TEXT-SEMANTICS: AMOS 7:1–9:15

7.2.1 Thus The Lord God Showed Me (7:1a–9c)

The first major unit deals with the first three of five visions shown to the ‘I’-figure (Amos) by the Lord. 7:1a–3c, 7:4a–6c and 7:7a–9c detail the first, second and third visions respectively, with the opening phrase כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (*thus the Lord GOD showed me*) in 7:1a, 7:4a and 7:7a serving as an introduction in each. The Lord is the subject of the verb

רָאָה (*to see*) which, being in the *hiphil*-form, is causative. Thus, what the prophet witnesses is understood to be a number of visions. Each vision is explained individually here.

7.2.1.1 Vision of locusts

The first vision is composed of both seeing (7:1b–2c) and dialogue (7:2d–3c) parts. The former begins with a *futurum instans*, a הֵנָּה+participle construction that indicates that something is imminent, which is revealed to be the Lord forming locusts, וְהֵנָּה יוֹצֵר גְּבִי (and behold! He was forming locusts) in 7:1b. Also seen are the fateful consequences of that action, namely the devouring of the vegetation by the locusts, אִם-כִּלְהָ לְאָכֹל אֶת-עֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ (when it is completed to eat the green plants of the earth) in 7:2b–c. A dialogue between the ‘I’-figure (the receiver of the vision, 7:1a) and the Lord follows in 7:2d–3c. The ‘I’-figure begins the dialogue, interceding with the Lord for forgiveness for Jacob: forgive now please, how can Jacob survive (7:2f–h). The response of the Lord is prompt: he repented (7:3a) and assured the ‘I’-figure that it shall not take place (7:3b). The term *it* in 7:3b refers back to the action of the forming of locusts in 7:1b. This positive and prompt response of the Lord to the intercession of the ‘I’-figure is significant. Briefly, the first vision can be portrayed as follows:

action of the Lord → consequence → action of the ‘I’-figure → consequence
 seeing part: the Lord forms locusts (action) → locusts eat the grass (consequence)
 ↓
 dialogue part: ‘I’-figure intercedes (action) → the Lord relents (consequence)

7.2.1.2 Vision of fire

The introduction containing the verb (הִרְאֵנִי) in *hiphil*-form forms a syntactic parallelism between the first two visions. Apart from this, both exhibit several semantic similarities.

- Like in the first vision, the second contains both a seeing part (7:4b–f) and a dialogue part (7:5a–6c).
- The הֵנָּה+participle construction, *futurum instans*, וְהֵנָּה קָרָא לְרֵב בָּאֵשׁ (and behold! He was about to call to contend by means of fire) in 7:4b–c, with locusts being replaced by fire as the object used by the Lord.

- The consequence of the fire is severe.³⁸⁸ It devoured everything, including the great deep and the territory: וַתֹּאכַל אֶת־הַהוֹם רֶבֶה וְאָכְלָה אֶת־הַחֲלָק (and it consumed the great deep and it devoured the territory). Destruction in the form of drought is the end-result of both the actions of locusts and the calling of fire.³⁸⁹
- The intercession on behalf of Jacob is common to both visions,³⁹⁰ the only difference being the substitution of סָלַח (*forgive*) by the more desperate נָחַל (*cease*).³⁹¹
- In both units the positive reaction of the Lord to the intercession of the ‘I’-figure adds to the significance of the intercessory role played by the ‘I’-figure.

From the above-mentioned content structure, it is evident that the second vision follows the same pattern of the first vision and can be represented as follows:

action of the Lord → consequence → action of the ‘I’-figure → consequence

seeing part: the Lord was about to call fire (action) → fire devoured (consequence)



dialogue part: the ‘I’-figure intercedes (action) → the Lord relents (consequence)

³⁸⁸ Francis Landy, “Vision and Poetic Speech in Amos,” in *Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of S. D. Goitein*, ed. Reuben Ahroni, HAR 11 (Columbus, Ohio: Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 1987), 227.

³⁸⁹ Linville, “Visions and Voices,” 28, remarks that the level of destruction brought about by locusts in the context of punishment can be understood more readily than that caused by fire, which can be beyond comprehension.

³⁹⁰ Regarding the likeness between the visions, see Uwe Becker, “Der Prophet als Fürbitter: Zum Literarhistorischen Ort der Amos-Visionen,” *VT* 51 (2001): 145, who speaks about the similar construction of the first four visions. Between the first two visions, the threat of destruction is twice revoked (7:3 and 7:6), and Israel is twice referred to as Jacob (7:2 and 7:5). Between the third and fourth visions, the Lord twice declares that he will not overlook the offences (7:8 and 8:2), and twice uses the term ‘my people Israel’ (7:8 and 8:2). He also compares Amos’ pleading with that of Abraham in Genesis 18. Both are twice afforded the opportunity to appeal to the Lord to cancel the punishments. See Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, “Verhoort God het Gebed van de Bidder? Over Abraham en Amos,” in *Bidden in het Oude Testament: Identiteit en Verhoring, Woede en Vreugde*, ed. Harm W. M. van Grol and Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, Utrechtse Studies 16 (Almere: Parthenon, 2013), 43–44; Bernhard A. Asen, “No, Yes and Perhaps in Amos and the Yahwist,” *VT* 43 (1993): 439.

³⁹¹ “There is no time for any other response; the dissolution of created order must not proceed at all.” See Lyle Eslinger, “The education of Amos,” in Ahroni, *Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of S. D. Goitein*, 39. See also Auld A. Graeme, *Amos*, T&T Clark Study Guides (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986; 1990; 1995; repr., London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 17.

7.2.1.3 Vision of a plumb-line

The third vision has the same introduction with the *hiphil*-form (הִרְאֵנִי) as that of the first and second vision. The vision is that of the Lord standing beside a wall with מִנְּזָלָה (plumb-line), an object in his hand instead of locusts and fire.³⁹² Unlike in the cases of the locusts and fire that had indicated a kind of destruction, the seeing part does not provide any information on what the Lord does with מִנְּזָלָה. Rather, the dialogue part reveals the reference to מִנְּזָלָה to be an omen of things to come. The vocabularies employed such as הִנְנִי שָׁם (*behold! I will set*) in 7:8g, לֹא־אֹסִיף עוֹד עָבוֹר (*I will no longer pass over it*)³⁹³ in 7:8h–i,³⁹⁴ וְנִשְׁמָו (*will be desolated*) in 7:9a, יִהְרָבוּ (*will be laid waste*) in 7:9b, וְאֶתְתִּי עַל (*I will rise against*) in 7:9c and בְּחֶרֶב (*sword*) in 7:9c, highlight the severity and rigor of the punishments predicted in this vision. The Lord is setting מִנְּזָלָה (plumb-line) amid his people. He will not relent or reverse his decisions as he did previously. In addition, he announces various disasters to come upon Israel, including the death of their King, Jeroboam. The nonappearance of the prophetic intercession on behalf of Israel, and the divine determination not to pardon Israel, depict the third vision to be more alarming than the first two.

The first three visions in the seeing-dialogue manner outlined below indicate a progression in the intensity of divine judgement.

elements in the visions	first vision	second vision	third vision
visualization	seeing of the locusts	seeing of the fire	seeing of the plumb-line
intercessory dialogue: ‘I’-figure	Lord God, forgive now please, how can Jacob stand? for he is small	Lord God, cease please, how can Jacob stand? for he is small	-----
responsorial dialogue: Lord God	it will not happen	it also will not happen	I set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel. I will no longer pass over it. I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword

³⁹² Cf. Benjamin J. Noonan, “There and Back Again: “Tin” or “Lead” in Amos 7:7–9?” *VT* 63 (2013): 299–307.

³⁹³ Presages an ominous future for the nation, see Noble, “Amos and Amaziah in Context,” 427.

³⁹⁴ The expression לֹא־אֹסִיף עוֹד עָבוֹר (*I will no longer pass over it*) confirms that the Lord’s patience has been exhausted. Hos 1:6 // Amos 7:8; 8:2. See Aaron Scharf, “The Fifth Vision of Amos in Context,” 51.

7.2.2 Amaziah–Amos Confrontation (7:10a–17f)

The second major unit 7:10a–17f is a narrative in the form of a confrontation between two figures, namely Amaziah and Amos. The encounter consists of three sections:³⁹⁵ (i) Amaziah makes a report to Jeroboam (7:10a–11c), (ii) Amaziah speaks to Amos (7:12a–13d), and (iii) Amos defies Amaziah (7:14a–17f).³⁹⁶ The following part explores each section in detail.

7.2.2.1 Amaziah reports to Jeroboam

Amaziah brought a report critical of Amos to King Jeroboam (7:10b–11c). The first allegation made is that Amos was plotting against the King among his own subjects, קָשָׁר עֲלֶיךָ, עָמוֹס בְּקֶרֶב בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל (*Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel*) in 7:10c. This amounted to the serious charge of treason or sedition. Jeroboam was also informed that the land cannot accept the words of Amos (7:10d–e). The expression פִּי־כֹה אָמַר (*for thus Amos said*) in 7:11a suggests that those words are about to be revealed. And so it happened: Jeroboam would die by the sword (7:11b) while Israel would be exiled (7:11c). This was a clever ploy by Amaziah to influence both the King and the people and to turn them against Amos for daring to threaten their security. Realising that his own privileged position could be in jeopardy, Amaziah was anxious to discredit both Amos and his message.

7.2.2.2 Amaziah speaks to Amos

Prophecy is the main topic of Amaziah's speech, attested by the repeated תִּנְבִּיאָה (*to prophesy*) in 7:12f and 13b. Also, he addresses Amos as חֹזֶה (*seer*) in 7:12b.³⁹⁷ However, he forbids him to prophesy in Bethel (7:13a–b),³⁹⁸ instead ordering him to go to Judah and to earn his

³⁹⁵ Noble presents the drama at Bethel from a theologico-political perspective in two acts.

“Act 1 (7:10–11). Amaziah and Jeroboam: the true state of Israel's religious institutions.

Act 2 (7:12–17). Amaziah versus Amos: Yahweh's judgement upon Israel's religious institutions.”

See Noble, “Amos and Amaziah in Context,” 427.

³⁹⁶ Mays, *Amos: A Commentary*, 134. This division of the narrative is detailed here.

³⁹⁷ See Watts, *Vision and Prophecy in Amos*, 11.

³⁹⁸ Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 771, notes that if Amaziah was certain that Amos was a “seer” who did in fact “prophesy,” then he is guilty of the offence alluded to in Amos 2:12. See also Francis Landy, *Beauty and the Enigma: And Other Essays on the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 312 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 178.

bread³⁹⁹ there (7:12c–e).⁴⁰⁰ The imperative forms of the verbs הָלַךְ (7:12c), בָּרַח (7:12d), and אָכַל (7:12e) well-reflect this pressure put on Amos.⁴⁰¹ In a similar manner, the directive not to prophesy in Bethel reflects the resolute tone of the resistance to Amos (7:13a–b): *but in Bethel, no way you ever add to prophesy* (וּבֵית-אֵל לֹא-תוֹסִיף עוֹד לְהַנְבִּיאַ). The *hiphil*-form, preceded by a negative particle (לֹא-תוֹסִיף) and the particle adverb which follows (עוֹד), equally reveal that Amaziah no longer approved of Amos prophesying in Bethel. Added to that, in 7:13c and in 7:13d he tries to vindicate his argument with the כִּי clause: כִּי מִקְדָּשׁ-מֶלֶךְ (for this is the sanctuary of the king) and וּבֵית מִמְלָכָה הוּא (and this is the house of the kingdom). Amaziah's attempt to secularise Bethel as the sanctuary of the king and the house of the kingdom is ironic, for Bethel is in fact the house of God.⁴⁰² The deeds of Amaziah and the repeated vocabularies in his assertion such as מֶלֶךְ and מִמְלָכָה reveal his submissiveness to the king rather than to the Lord and his docility in relation to the royal house, in contrast to his disregard for the laws of the house of God.⁴⁰³ This reaction of Amaziah contradicts his position as a priest of the Lord.

7.2.2.3 Amos defies Amaziah

Amos' reply to Amaziah has two parts: (i) he defies Amaziah's intervention in his prophecy (7:14a–15d) and (ii) he announces the word of the Lord to Amaziah (7:16a–17f).

(i) Amos' words to Amaziah begin with a firm denial: לֹא-נִבִּיאָ אֲנִי (*I am not a prophet*) in 7:14c. He asserts again, וְלֹא בֶן-נִבִּיאָ אֲנִי (*and I am not a son of a prophet*) in 7:14d.⁴⁰⁴ The

³⁹⁹ The allusion exists that a prophet could claim remuneration for his oracles (cf. 1 Sam 9:8; 1 Kgs 14:3; 2 Kgs 8:8). See Noble, "Amos and Amaziah in Context," 429.

⁴⁰⁰ Martha E. Campos, "Structure and Meaning in the Third Vision of Amos (7:7–17)," *JHebS* 11 (2011): 21, who notes that by questioning the southern prophet's right to prophesy in the north, the priest also refuses to accept the union under the Lord of both kingdoms. Amaziah prohibits Amos to prophesy at Bethel, further hampering his true assignment.

⁴⁰¹ Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 771, observes that in spite of the unfriendliness, Amaziah speaks in a formal manner, which is commanding and threatening. See also Meindert Dijkstra, "'I am Neither a Prophet Nor a Prophet's Pupil': Amos 7:9–17 as the Presentation of a Prophet Like Moses," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, *OtSt* 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 126.

⁴⁰² Noble, "Amos and Amaziah in Context," 429.

⁴⁰³ J. Blake Couey, "Amos vii 10–17 and Royal Attitudes toward Prophecy in the Ancient Near East," *VT* 58 (2008): 312–13, remarks that Amaziah is motivated to act more by political considerations than by any religious responsibilities.

⁴⁰⁴ Lewis remarks that in contrast to priesthood and the office of a king which were transmitted to offspring in Israel, prophecy did not follow this convention. See the discussion on בֶּן-נִבִּיאָ in Jack P. Lewis, "'A Prophet's Son' (Amos 7:14) Reconsidered," *ResQ* 49 (2007): 229–40.

repeated usage of אָנְכִי highlights the implication of the denial. Both negations appear to create a doubt about Amaziah's addressing of Amos as a seer and his reference to his act of prophesy in 7:12b–f. This sense of doubt is not allayed by the two assertive statements which follow in 7:14e and in 7:14f, where Amos describes himself as a cattle-raiser (כִּי־בֹקֵר) and a gatherer of sycamore figs (וּבֹזֵלִים שִׁקְמִים).⁴⁰⁵ However, the setting changes completely in 7:15a–d where Amos explains the divine commissioning for his act of prophecy. The phrases like יְהוָה וַיִּקְהַנִּי (*the LORD took me*) in 7:15a, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה (*the LORD said to me*) in 7:15b and לֵךְ הִנָּבֵא אֶל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*go, prophesy to my people Israel*) in 7:15c–d confirm this divine commissioning. Hence the words of Amos in 7:14 that he is neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, and his admission that he is simply a cattle raiser and a gatherer of sycamore figs portrays Amaziah as a figure of ridicule.⁴⁰⁶ In addition, presenting himself as being insignificant and as not belonging to any brotherhood of prophets in turn strengthens the element of divine commissioning in his call to prophesy in 7:15.

Undoubtedly, the irony of the situation resulting from the polemic between Amos and Amaziah is also extended to a confrontation between the Lord and Amaziah.⁴⁰⁷ It is interesting to note that the same imperative verb לֵךְ (*go*) appears in both 7:12c and 7:15c and while, in both cases, it stands as a non-negotiable instruction to Amos, the subjects of this instruction are different. In 7:12c it is Amaziah, who asks Amos to go and prophesy in the land of Judah, whereas in 7:15c it is the Lord who directs Amos to go and prophesy to the people of Israel. By rejecting Amaziah's orders, Amos remained faithful to the Lord.

(ii) Far from feeling intimidated by the demands of Amaziah not to prophesy in Bethel, וּבֵית־אֵל לֹא־תוֹסִיף עוֹד לְהִנָּבֵא (*but in Bethel, no way you ever add to prophesy*, 7:13a–b), Amos is emboldened to proclaim the word of the Lord directly to the chief priest himself. It is ironic that Amaziah, the one who ordered Amos to go to Judah, בָּרַח־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה (*flee, for you, to the land of Judah*, 7:12d) and prophesy, וְשָׁם תִּנָּבֵא (*and there you can prophesy*,

⁴⁰⁵ Steiner, *Stockmen from Tekoa*, 105–109, who explains in detail the combining of two occupations. For a comprehensive study on Amos' occupations refer to the entire book. See also Niesiolowski-Spanò, "Biblical Prophet Amos: A Simple, Poor Shepherd from Judah?" 213–14; Stanley N. Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel: A New Interpretation* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990), 41–50.

⁴⁰⁶ Viberg, "Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony," 111, who notices Amos' reply in 7:14 to be ironic. Two forms of self-deprecating irony are explained, one where the speaker overstates his position, in contrast to the other, where he understates his standing. In Amos 7:14, Amos deliberately puts himself into the second category with the intention of exposing the arrogance of Amaziah, the target of his irony.

⁴⁰⁷ Viberg, "Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony," 113.

7:12f), is the very person told to listen to the prophet, *וְעַתָּה שָׁמַע* (*hear now*, 7:16a). The word that he is being asked to hear and which is recorded in 7:17b–f, turns out to be a devastating judgement against him. The announcements made by Amos are quite shocking: that his wife would commit adultery in the city (7:17b), would bring great shame on him and would be a disgrace to his position as the high priest. Then to be faced with the prospect of (i) his sons and daughters dying by the sword (7:17c), (ii) losing his land (7:17d), and (iii) death in a foreign land (7:17e), the disasters would be unbearable. The vocabulary used, *your wife* (*אִשְׁתְּךָ*), *your sons* (*וּבְנֶיךָ*), *your daughters* (*וּבְנֹתֶיךָ*), *your land* (*אֶרְצְךָ*), emphasises the very personal nature of this attack on Amaziah.⁴⁰⁸ Then adding to his woe is the announcement that Israel would go into exile (7:17f). The words relating to Israel's exile is the very one used in evidence against Amos in 7:11c, when Amaziah determined to discredit the prophet in the eyes of King Jeroboam.

The term *לָכֵן* (*therefore*) in the introductory formula (7:17a) confirms that the punishments announced are a direct response to the orders issued by Amaziah in 7:13a–d and repeated by Amos in 7:16c–d. Amaziah asked Amos to stop prophesying against Israel (7:16c–d), which conflicted not only with Amos' prophetic action, but with the divine commissioning itself in 7:15c–d.⁴⁰⁹ The word-play in the two opposing commands, 7:15b–d and 16b–d, should be noted. The positive words of the Lord and those spoken by Amos, *וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְהוָה* (*the LORD said to me*) in 7:15b and *הִנָּבֵא אֶל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*prophesy to my people Israel*) in 7:15d, contrast with the negative words of Amaziah, introduced by Amos, *אָתָּה אָמַר* (*you constantly say*) in 7:16b and *לֹא תִנָּבֵא עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*do not prophesy against Israel*) in 7:16d.

⁴⁰⁸ Tim Bulkeley, “‘Exile Away from His Land’: Is Landlessness the Ultimate Punishment in Amos?” in *The Gospel and the Land of Promise: Christian Approaches to the Land of the Bible*, eds. Philip Church et al. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 81–82.

⁴⁰⁹ Alan Cooper, “The Meaning of Amos’ Third Vision (Amos 7:7–9),” in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, ed. Mordechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler and Jeffrey H. Tigay (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 15, describes Amaziah’s inability to understand the word of God as a priest’s terrible failing. See also Mathew Manakatt, “A Judgment Narrative and Two Pairs of Visions (Amos 7,1–8,3)” (PhD diss., Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae Roma, 1992), 252, the endeavour of Amaziah to silence the agent of the Lord, will help to explain the reason for the punishment in Amos 7:17.

In short, the narration of the confrontation between Amaziah and Amos inserted between the five visions presents certain ironical thoughts.

- Amaziah, the high priest of Bethel, reports to Jeroboam that Amos is conspiring against him. However, he does not make any mention of Amos' intercessions on behalf of the people of Israel as indicated in the visions. The question of who is in fact conspiring, Amos or Amaziah, gives rise to some irony.
- It is ironic that Amaziah, the high priest, whose duty it is to serve the Lord, in fact serves the King.
- In 7:5c, Amos beseeched the Lord (הַדְּלִינָא) to stop the punishment, whereas in 7:13a–b, Amaziah ordered Amos to stop prophesying. What a contrast!
- The positive response of Amos to the Lord's command, לֵךְ הַנְּבִיאָה אֶל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*go prophesy to my people Israel*) in 7:15c–d, contrasts sharply to his negative response to the command issued by Amaziah, לֹא תִנְבֵּא עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא תִשָּׁרַף עַל־בֵּית יִשְׁחָק (*you do not prophesy against Israel and do not speak against the house of Isaac*) in 7:16c–d.
- Amaziah demanded of Amos not to prophesy in Bethel, whereas Amos demanded of Amaziah to hear the word of the Lord.
- Amaziah complains to King Jeroboam about Amos, however there is no indication of any action taken against him. Ironically, Amaziah is the one who suffers punishment.

7.2.3 Thus the Lord God Showed Me (8:1a–9:4d)

The confrontation between Amaziah and Amos closes the second major unit. The third major unit is divided into three parts: 8:1a–3e, 8:4a–14g and 9:1a–4d, the first and third of which contain the fourth and fifth vision. The middle part (8:4a–14g) is a dialogue in which the oppressors and tormenters are asked to realize their wrongdoing and consequently the Lord's judgement upon them. The following section explores each part.

7.2.3.1 Vision of a basketful of summer fruit

Following the break in the descriptions of the visions, they resume in unit 8:1a–3e which is an account of the fourth vision. Elements common to all four visions are: (i) the introductory

formula *כֹּה הָרָאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה*, (ii) the term *הַיְהוָה* which introduces the Lord, and (iii) the inclusion of dialogue between the Lord and Amos. Apart from these, the passages of dialogue in the third and fourth visions follow a similar pattern.

- Each begins with the interrogative sentence, *מָה-אַתָּה רֹאֶה עֲמוֹס* (*what do you see Amos?*). Amos gives short replies; ‘a plumb-line’ (7:8b–e) and ‘a basket of summer fruit’ (8:2b–e).
- Both visions record a crucial declaration of the Lord, *לֹא-אֶחְסֶיף עוֹד עֲבוֹר לוֹ* (*I will no longer pass over it*) in 7:8h and 8:2h.
- Similar to the third vision, the fourth vision ends with the announcements of punishments. The vocabulary used *וַהֲלִילּוּ* (*wailings*) in 8:3a, *רַב הַפְּגָר* (*the corpses will be many*) in 8:3c and *הָם* (*hush!*) in 8:3e⁴¹⁰ confirm the judgemental tone of the fourth vision.

The paronomasia involving *קִיץ* (8:2e) and *קָץ* (8:2g)⁴¹¹ distinguishes the fourth vision. This wordplay allows for Amos’ reply to the Lord to be interpreted as a divine judgement. Normally, a basket of summer fruit is associated with something pleasurable.⁴¹² However, the speech of the Lord which follows in 8:2g, *בָּא הַקָּץ אֶל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*the end has come upon my people Israel*) conveys a sense of hopelessness.⁴¹³ The predicted devastation increases the likelihood of this grim situation coming to pass. Instead of songs of joy, there will be wailing and songs of mourning. There will be many unburied corpses and these will be thrown down everywhere.

⁴¹⁰ This word *הָם* (*hush!*) previously occurred in 6:10, where a survivor advises against using the name of the Lord. However, in 8:3, where death is all-around, it is the Lord himself, and not a survivor, who orders the silence. See Landy, *Beauty and the Enigma*, 176.

⁴¹¹ Clinton J. Moyer, “‘What Do You See?’ Verbalizing the Visual in Biblical Prophecy,” *Society of Biblical Literature 2011 Seminar Papers* (San Francisco: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 2, 4, who verbalizes the vision in Amos’ prophecy by observing a wordplay between the etymologically unconnected words *qáyis* and *qēs*. In doing so he draws a connection between the visual experience (basket of summer fruit) and the prophetic communication (approaching divine punishment), remarking that puns are the catalyst for the forging of the link between the visual experience and its verbal utterances in the prophecy of Amos (8:1–3). Christoph Levin, “‘The Word of Yahweh’: A Theological Concept in the Book of Jeremiah,” in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Michael Floyd and Robert D. Haak (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 47, refers to it as an assonance vision because of the similarly sounding *קִיץ* (Amos 8:2e) and *קָץ* (Amos 8:2g) while interpreting the two visions in Jer 1:11–14. See also Siegfried Bergler, “‘Auf Der Mauer – auf dem Altar:’ Noch Einmal die Visionen des Amos,” *VT* 50 (2000): 448.

⁴¹² Yvonne Sherwood, “Of Fruit and Corpses and Wordplay Visions. Picturing Amos 8.1–3,” *JSOT* 92 (2001):9.

⁴¹³ Moyer, “‘What Do You See?’ Verbalizing the Visual in Biblical Prophecy,” 1, who explains the end of summer (*qáyis*) metaphorically equal to the absolute end (*qēs*), sheer divine destruction.

7.2.3.2 Hear this, you who trample on the needy

Unit 8:4a–14g begins with the demand *hear this*, being directed at the oppressors who trample the needy and cause the ruination of the poor (8:4b–c). However, what is to be heard is not immediately clear. Instead, what follows is an account of the hypocritical and exploitative deeds of the oppressors (8:5b–6c). Their hypocrisy is evident in their murmuring: *when will the new moon be gone and we may sell grain and Sabbath and we may open corn* (8:5b–e).⁴¹⁴ As soon as the Sabbath is over they resume their exploitation of the weak. They make the ephah small and the shekel great and falsify the weighing scale.⁴¹⁵ The poor are bought for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes, with even the sweepings of the grain being sold (8:5f–6c). What is to be heard (8:4a), is revealed in 8:7a–14g, and the Lord swears an oath that he will not forget their unfair deeds. The Lord declares: the sun will disappear at noon – וְהָאֵתִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּצַהֲרָיִם (8:9c), the earth will be darkened in the daylight – וְהַחַשְׁכָּתִי לְאָרֶץ בְּיוֹם אֶחָד (8:9d), the feasts and celebrations will be turned into an occasion of mourning and lamentation – וְהַפִּכְתִּי חֲגִיכֶם לְאֵכָל (8:10a–b) and sackcloth will be worn and heads will be shaved – וְהַעֲלִיתִי עַל-כָּל-מִתְנַיִם שֹׁק (8:10c–d). Thus, the punishment would be severe. It is compared to the mourning over an only son (וְשִׁמְתִּיהָ כְּאֶבֶל יָחִיד), something which is particularly intense (8:10e).⁴¹⁶ The oath of the Lord continues with the threat of a famine of hearing the word of the Lord: וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ ... כִּי אִם-לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶת דְּבַרִּי יְהוָה (8:11c–f). The situation is critical where the people go to and fro seeking the word of the Lord, but without success: וְלֹא יִמְצְאוּ ... וְנָעוּ מִיָּם עֵד- (8:12a–d). It is to be noted that the Lord and the prophet repeatedly insisted that the people seek the Lord (דִּרְשׁוּנִי in 5:4 and אֶת-יְהוָה in 5:6). The perilous situation of the people is evident from this exposition. Added to this is the seeking in vain of the gods and goddesses of other nations, namely, Samaria, Dan and Beersheba, acts that could be seen as sinful (8:14a–g).⁴¹⁷ Hence, they will fall (וְנָפְלוּ), never to rise again (וְלֹא-יָקוּמוּ), 8:14f–g.

⁴¹⁴ Mark W. Bartusch, *Understanding Dan: An Exegetical Study of a Biblical City, Tribe and Ancestor*, JSOTSup 379 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 240, mentions they had desecrated the sacredness of the festival period and Sabbath by the expectation of unfair profit on the following day.

⁴¹⁵ Lev 19: 35–36; Deut 25:14. See Thomas E. MacComiskey, ed., *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary 1, Hosea, Joel and Amos* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 322.

⁴¹⁶ See Stefano Cottrozz, *Expect the Unexpected: Aspects of Pragmatic Foregrounding in Old Testament Narratives*, LHBOTS 510 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 72; cf. also Jer 6:26; Zech 12:10.

⁴¹⁷ See Göran Eidevall, “A Farewell to the Anticultic Prophet: Attitudes towards the Cult in the Book of Amos,” in *Priests and Cults in the Book of the Twelve*, ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, ANEM 14 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 112; cf. Deut 12.

7.2.3.3 Inescapable destruction

The fifth and final vision differs from the previous four in the following ways: (i) destruction is not brought about by locusts or fire as was the case in the first and second visions, but by the direct involvement of the Lord himself; (ii) no more pardoning is offered to Israel, as happened in the first two visions, rather Israel is going to be punished and no one would escape this judgement; (iii) as in the third and fourth visions, the Lord did not inquire of Amos what he was seeing, rather Amos witnesses the severe punishments befalling Israel; (iv) only in the fifth vision are actions that are carried out in such a horrific manner and that result in ruin, recorded in the first person form. These include: *וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּחֶרֶב* (*I will kill the remainder of them with the sword*) in 9:1g, *יָדִי תִקְחֶם* (*my hand will haul them out*) in 9:2b, *אוֹרִידֶם* (*I will bring them down*) in 9:2d, *אֶחְפֹּשׁ* (*I will search out*) in 9:3b, *וְלִקְחֹתִים* (*I will take them*) in 9:3c, *אֶצְוֶה אֶת־הַנָּחָשׁ* (*I will command the serpent*) in 9:3e, *אֶצְוֶה אֶת־הַחֶרֶב* (*I will command the sword*) in 9:4b and *וְשִׁמְתִּי עֵינִי עֲלֵיהֶם* (*I will set my eye upon them*) in 9:4d.⁴¹⁸

Right throughout the fifth vision it is made clear that punishment is unavoidable: there would be no escape and no hiding place.⁴¹⁹ The command is given to smite the capital. The harshness of the Lord's judgements is made manifest by the use of the terms *הָךְ* (*smite*) in 9:1d, *וְיִרְעָשׁוּ* (*shake*) in 9:1e and *וּבְצָעֵם* (*shatter*) in 9:1f.⁴²⁰ It is also made clear that any managing to survive would be put to the sword by the Lord. Antithetical parallelisms in 9:2a–d and 9:3a–d effectively convey the message that escape is impossible.

- The acts of digging into Sheol and climbing up to heaven to save their lives form an antithetical parallelism, where the nouns *שְׁאוֹל* (*Sheol*, 9:2a) and *שָׁמַיִם* (*heaven*, 9:2c) are antithetical, as are the verbs *יִחְתְּרוּ* (*dig*, 9:2a) and *יַעֲלוּ* (*climb up*, 9:2c).
- The actions of the Lord and those of Israel are also antithetical. If the sons of Israel dig into Sheol, the Lord's hand will haul them out, *יִחְתְּרוּ בְּשְׁאוֹל* (9:2a) versus *יָדִי תִקְחֶם* (9:2b).

⁴¹⁸ "It is possible that there is some development within the visions: the first two visions concentrate on the agents of Yahweh's judgment (locusts and fire); in the third and fourth vision the refrain 'I will no longer pass by them' shifts the attention towards Yahweh's personal involvement in Israel's punishment and this finds its climax in the fifth vision where it is Yahweh who is the sole focus of the vision." See Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 67.

⁴¹⁹ Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 66.

⁴²⁰ Terry Collins, "Threading as a Stylistic Feature of Amos," in Johannes C. de Moor, *The Elusive Prophet*, 96–98.

(9:2b); if they climb up to heaven, the Lord will bring them down, יַעֲלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם (9:2c) versus מִשָּׁם אוֹרִידֵם (9:2d).

- All their attempts at escape, even in the remotest of places such as the top of Mount Carmel and the bottom of the sea, are doomed to fail.⁴²¹ The contrasting words רֹאשׁ הַכַּרְמֶל (9:3a) and קִרְקַע הַיָּם (9:3d) confirm the antithesis. Apart from the antithetical elements, some other notable parallelisms occur in these verses and they are: יִתְבָּאוּ (*hide themselves*) in 9:3a and יִסְתְּרוּ מִנִּגְדִּי עֵינַי (*hide from my sight*) in 9:3d; אֶחְפֹּשׁ (*I will search out*) in 9:3b and אֶצְנֶה (*I will command the serpent*) in 9:3e; וְלִקְחֹתִים (*I will take them*) in 9:3c and וְהָרַגְתִּים (*and it shall kill them*) in 9:4c.

All these parallelisms emphasise the fact none would escape judgement.⁴²² The expression *I will set my eye upon them for evil and not for good* (9:4d) in the visions, makes the point that the Lord will not delay in executing his judgement.⁴²³

7.2.4 An Assured Epilogue

A description of the Lord and the promise of restoration of Israel are the main concerns of unit 9:5a–15d.

7.2.4.1 The Lord is his name

The short description of the Lord in 9:5a–6e, recorded immediately after the fifth vision, accentuates the content of the vision. First of all, the divine naming appears in a lengthened form – Lord GOD of hosts (אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה הַצְבָּאוֹת) in 9:5a – inducing a sense of dread in the context of the judgements announced in the fifth vision. In addition, the actions of the Lord are depicted as being furious in the description. The Lord touches the earth, resulting in trembling effects such as the melting of the earth (וַתִּמּוֹג) 9:5c, the lamentation of the

⁴²¹ See Hadjiev, *The Composition and Redaction of the Book of Amos*, 64, who speaks about the sets of notions, which give rise to the idea of a ubiquitous God from whom Israel cannot escape.

⁴²² Amos 9:2–4 lays stress on God's indignation which cannot be eluded. God vows to seize them from wherever they choose to conceal themselves. If they dig into Sheol or climb up to heaven, God's hand will take them; if they hide on the top of Carmel, God will find them; if they hide at the bottom of the sea, God will order the serpent to pursue and kill them; if they are imprisoned by their enemies, they will die by the sword at God's command. Dempsey, *Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk*, 35. See also Clarence Hassell Bullock, *Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 73, when judgement comes, escape will be impossible.

⁴²³ Viberg, "Amos 7:14: A Case of Subtle Irony," 109, finds the expression וְשִׁמְתִּי עֵינַי (*I will fix my eyes*) apparently for good reason, but uttered ironically, clarifies the significance of divine judgement.

inhabitants (וְאֶבְלֵי) 9:5d, and the rising and subsiding of the river (וְעֹלְתָהּ כִּיָּאֵר כְּלֶה וְשָׁקַעָה כִּיָּאֵר) 9:6c and pours them over the face of the earth (וַיִּשְׁפֹּכֶם עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ) 9:6d. All of these destructive actions of the Lord demonstrate his supreme power. The sovereignty of the Lord is further shown in the expression as the Lord builds his staircases in the heavens (הַבּוֹנֶה בְּשָׁמַיִם מַעְלֹתָיו) 9:6a and establishes his vault upon the earth (וְאֶגְדָּתוֹ עַל-אָרֶץ יִסְדָּהּ) 9:6b. The combination of the terms heaven (שָׁמַיִם) in 9:6a and earth (אָרֶץ) in 9:6d projects the majesty of the Lord, the Lord of all. And finally, all these descriptions of the Lord are sealed in 9:6e with the proclamation יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ (*the LORD is his name*). The interrogative sentence recorded immediately afterward in 9:7a–f is a grief-stricken question from the Lord. The Lord addresses the audience as sons of Israel, which reminds them about their deliverance from the land of Egypt (9:7d). In addition, this question also reveals the sovereignty of the Lord over other nations, as he delivered the Philistines from Caphtor and Aram from Kir (9:7e–f). Thus, the unique status of Israel revealed in 3:2 (*you only have I known of all the families of the earth*) is in effect rejected.⁴²⁵

7.2.4.2 I will plant them upon their land

Unit 9:8a–15d contains reference to both judgement and promise: 9:8a–10d describes the judgement and 9:11a–15d the promise of restoration.⁴²⁶ The judgement described, however, is not so severe as to cover all, rather, the destruction will affect particularly the sinful kingdom.⁴²⁷ *Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom* (9:8a).⁴²⁸ It is

⁴²⁴ Möller notes that this, the third account of the Lord which appears in the book, brings a more powerful portrayal of the Lord's power to bring ruin and the accompanying total grief. See Karl Möller, "Hear This Word against You": A Fresh Look at the Arrangement and the Rhetorical Strategy of the Book of Amos," *VT* 50 (2000): 514.

⁴²⁵ Barton, *Amos's Oracles against the Nations*, 36; Robert Khua Hnin Thang, "The Theology of the Land in Amos 7–9" (PhD diss., University of Gloucestershire, 2011), 175.

⁴²⁶ The Lord will shake Israel in a big sieve as part of a purifying judgement. All those who continue to reject the word of the Lord would remain in the sieve and would die by the sword. On the contrary, those who repented would pass through the sieve and survive. See Rainer Albertz, "Exile as Purification: Reconstructing the 'Book of the Four'," in Redditt and Schart, *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve*, 244.

⁴²⁷ "Therefore, the sieve metaphor is skilfully used to unlock the dilemma between total destruction and the survival of the remnant." See Lo, "Remnant Motif in Amos, Micah and Zephaniah," in Grant, Lo and Wenham, *A God of Faithfulness*, 136; James D. Nogalski, Introduction to the Hebrew Prophets (Nashville: Abingdon, 2018), 117.

⁴²⁸ Klingbeil and Klingbeil, "The Prophetic Voice of Amos as a Paradigm for Christians in the Public Square," 179, describes it as a passage from annihilation to preservation by way of the idea of the shaking of Israel which will root out the wrongdoers in Israel.

parallel to the judgement the Lord has announced in the fifth vision: *I will set my eye upon them for evil and not for good* (9:4d). The expression ‘setting my eye upon them for evil and not for good’ is completely justified in the content of the wiping of the sinful kingdom from the face of the earth in 9:8a–b. At the same time it is to be noted that here there is a slight difference in the tone of the judgement, in that the Lord promises that he will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob⁴²⁹ (9:8c), which deviates from the previous declaration of total destruction, including the survivors in 9:1g. References to destruction continue in 9:9a–10d, with the Lord reiterating that the sinners (of my people) would die by the sword.

The promises of restoration made in 9:11 come as a welcome relief from the sustained warnings and announcements of punishments. The vocabulary employed in 9:11 points to renewal: אָקִים (*I will raise up*) in 9:11a and 11c, וְגִדְרָתִי (and *I will repair*) in 9:11b, וּבְנִיתִיהָ (and *I will rebuild*) in 9:11d. The booth of David⁴³⁰ will be re-established, breaches in it will be repaired, its ruins will be restored to its former glory.⁴³¹ This is a proclamation of hope for the fallen house of Israel. They will once more experience prosperity with a bountiful harvest and an abundance of grapes and sweet wine in place of the famine and drought foretold.⁴³² The terminologies וְהָטִיפוּ הַהָרִים עֲסִיס (and *the mountains will drop sweet wine*), וְנָטְעוּ כְרָמִים (they *will plant vineyards*), וְשָׁתוּ אֶת־יַיִנָּם (and *they will drink their wine*), וְעָשׂוּ גִבּוֹר

⁴²⁹ Andersen and Freedman, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction*, 410. This is the last time the term house of Jacob occurs in Amos. Andersen and Freedman observe an introverted pattern of the occurrences of this term, as outlined below:

House of Jacob	(3:13)
Pride of Jacob	(6:8)
Jacob	(7:2)
Jacob	(7:5)
Pride of Jacob	(8:7)
House of Jacob	(9:8)

⁴³⁰ David is twice mentioned by name in the prophecy of Amos (6:5 and 6:11). For a detailed discussion, see Greg Goswell, “David in the Prophecy of Amos,” *VT* 61 (2011): 248–56. See also Alessandro Coniglio, “‘The Tabernacle of David That is Fallen’ (Amos 9:11): An Exegetical Study of a Moot Expression,” *Liber Annuus* 63 (2013): 137–56, where, the unique expression סֶכֶת דָּוִד in 9:11 is examined in detail. This begins with a lexical analysis of סֶכֶת דָּוִד, which is followed by a discussion on the building terminologies as they occur in Amos (see pages 138–47). Cf. John A. Dunne, “David’s Tent as Temple in Amos 9:11–15: Understanding the Epilogue of Amos and Considering Implications for the Unity of the Book,” *WTJ* 73 (2011): 363–74.

⁴³¹ Klingbeil and Klingbeil, “The Prophetic Voice of Amos as a Paradigm for Christians in the Public Square,” 179, who consider that the expression booth of David is used to typify the glorious and exemplary period of David’s reign, which serves as a model for reinstatement.

⁴³² Marlow makes a specific reference to the fact that the final verses (9:13) are an inversion of the opening verses (1:2). See Marlow, “The Other Prophet,” 78, 82; Kenneth E. Pomykala, “Jerusalem as the Fallen Booth of David in Amos 9.11,” in *God’s Word for Our World. Volume I, Biblical Studies in Honor of Simon John De Vries*, ed. J. Harold Ellens et al., JSOTSup 388 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 289.

(*they will also make gardens*), and *וְאָכְלוּ אֶת-פְּרִיָהֶם* (*and eat their fruit*) in 9:13c–14g confirm this state of prosperity and happiness.⁴³³ Instead of exile as prophesied, they are assured of having possession of the remnant of Edom and of all the nations (9:12a). The promised end of captivity is a fitting climax to all the blessings and it is notable that it is the Lord himself who will return the captives and plant them in their own land (9:14a, 15a).⁴³⁴ Thus, the Lord will restore Israel to what it was in the days of old.

7.3 TEXT-PRAGMATICS: AMOS 7:1–9:15

7.3.1 Communication: Visions

The communication in the five visions involves, in the main, two characters, the Lord and the ‘I’-figure. The question of which of the two begins the communication then arises. Convincing arguments could be made for both. On the one hand it could be said that by allowing the ‘I’-figure to see things, the Lord is the initiator. Supporting this proposition is the fact that each vision begins with a qatal clause, namely *כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה* (*thus the Lord GOD showed me*) in 7:1a, 7:4a and 8:1a, and *כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי* (*thus he showed me*) in 7:7a and *רָאִיתִי אֶת-אֲדֹנָי* (*I saw the Lord*) in 9:1a. On the other hand, however, the ‘I’-figure is the one who begins the dialogue, verified by the expressions *אָמַרְנִי יְהוָה וְאָמַר* (*I said, Lord GOD*) in 7:2a–b and in 7:5a.

The ‘I’-figure remains anonymous until the Lord addresses him as Amos (7:8b–c) in the third vision. It is evident that the ‘I’-figure plays a prominent role in the first two visions. (i) The ‘I’-figure not only receives the visions, but he reports on them as well (7:1a–2c, 4a–f). (ii) It can be inferred that the ‘I’-figure is directly involved in the visions as he takes on the role of mediator between the Lord and Jacob. He addresses the Lord in the vocative and makes timely intercessions on behalf of Jacob (7:2e–h, 5b–e). In addition, during the mediation, he notifies the Lord about the feeble state of Jacob (how can Jacob stand? for he is small). This emotional intercession is intended to generate compassion for Jacob and thereby to reduce the punishments foretold about him. It is to be noted that the ‘Jacob’-

⁴³³ James D. Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve and Beyond: Collected Essays of James D. Nogalski*, AIL 29 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 185–86, comments that the restoration of prosperity is an affirmation of the renewal of the relationship with the Lord (cf. also Hos 2:14; Joel 2:12–27; 4:19; Amos 9:13–14; Haggai; Zechariah; Malachi).

⁴³⁴ Snyman, “Eretz and Adama in Amos,” in Niemann and Augustin, *Stimulation from Leiden*, 144.

figure is not at all active in the visions, however, the 'I'-figure acts on his behalf. (iii) And what is more, the pivotal role of the 'I'-figure is confirmed when the Lord, in response to the intercessions, relents and reverses his decision to send locusts and fire as punishment (7:3a–c, 6a–c).

In the third, fourth and fifth visions the focus is very much on the Lord who becomes the central figure. In the third vision, he is seen standing by a wall with a plumb-line in his hand (7:7b–c). Saying that he intends to set this among the people of Israel, הִנְנִי שֵׁם אֶנְדָּה בְּקֶרֶב עַמִּי (behold! I set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel, 7:8g), he pronounces punishments, even death by the sword (7:9a–c). Ominously, in the fourth vision the Lord declares that the end has come for Israel (8:2g). In the fifth vision, the Lord, standing at the altar, pronounces punishments, his fury being reflected in their severity. In each of the three visions the anger of the Lord is apparent, most especially where the first person form is used for the announcements (7:8g, 8h–i, 9c; 8:2h–i, 9c–10e, 11c; 9:1g, 2b, 2d, 3b, 3d–e, 4b, 4d). Having seen how Israel had failed to reciprocate following his earlier intercessions on their behalf, the 'I'-figure decides to remain silent. In this way he proposes his sympathy for the Lord who vows never again to overlook their wrongdoing (7:8h–i and 8:2h–i).

It should be noted that the 'I'-figure who presents a very comprehensive account of each vision, does not in fact address anyone in particular. Because of the absence of a 'you'-figure, it can be inferred that the text-immanent reader is present. Through the eyes of the 'I'-figure he becomes involved in the visions, considering himself to be an addressee. Thus, with the contents of the visions being directed at him, he comes to realise their significance. Having knowledge of the destruction predicted to be caused by locusts and fire, the text-immanent reader becomes nervous. He is, however, reassured when the 'I'-figure intercedes with the Lord, who agrees to cancel his decision to impose punishments. This experience discloses for the text-immanent reader the powerful role played by the prophet and the closeness of his relationship with the Lord.

All of a sudden the mood changes in the third vision. Holding a plumb-line in his hand, the Lord declares that he will no longer forgive the people of Israel. Being aware of this declaration, the text-immanent reader waits in hope for the intervention of the prophet, as had occurred in the previous two visions. However, his hope is in vain. Realizing that the

prophetic mediation intended to find a peaceful solution would be futile, the text-immanent reader is left feeling helpless. Rather than bringing relief, the situation of the text-immanent reader is seen to deteriorate even further in the fourth vision. Not only is mediation out of the question, but the Lord announces that *the end has come upon my people Israel* (8:2g). Through the use of the expression *my people Israel* the text-immanent reader comes to realize the strength of the bond between the Lord and the people of Israel.⁴³⁵ Therefore, witnessing the sundering of this special relationship is heart-breaking for the text-immanent reader. It can be inferred that becoming aware of the lamentable condition of the people of Israel is the cause of his sadness. The sense of despair in the declarations, הִנְנִי שֹׁם אֶנְדָּה בְּקֶרֶב עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*behold, I set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel*) in 7:8g, and בָּא הָקֵץ אֶל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*the end has come upon my people Israel*) in 8:2g, informs the text-immanent reader that the relationship appears to have irretrievably broken down.

The fourth vision is followed by a prophetic speech in 8:4a–14g where for the first time a ‘you’-figure is addressed. Through the discursive now-moment perspective in the text (שָׁמָּה), the text-immanent reader can associate himself with the ‘you’-figure. The ‘you’-figure receives a prophetic command to listen. Before elaborating on what is to be heard, the ‘you’-figure is identified as the people who crush the needy and bring ruin on the poor. It is reasonable to assume that these unjust acts of the ‘you’-figure provide the reason for the divine punishments presaged in 7:8g and 8:2g. Accordingly, the anonymous ‘you’-figure and the character *my people Israel* are one and the same. What motivated the Lord to announce punishments against his own people now becomes clear to the text-immanent reader as well. Moreover, the conversation between the ‘you’-figure marked by a ‘we’-figure usage in an embedded direct speech in 8:5b–6c firmly aligned the text-immanent reader with those who had fraudulently obtained their wealth through exploitation and deception. The text-immanent author, namely the prophet, barely conceals sarcasm in his command to listen, because what is demanded of the ‘you’-figure is to hear themselves speak of their own hypocrisy and dishonesty.

The Lord is hugely disappointed to see the behaviour of people of Israel and their ill-gotten gains. Their lack of sincerity is obvious. Everything about them is false. They cannot wait

⁴³⁵ Allen, “Amos, Prophet of Solidarity,” 48.

for the new moon and the Sabbath to be over so that they can resume their cheating and taking advantage of the poorest and weakest in society. False piety and then false weights. There is nothing at all genuine about their behaviour. Therefore, the Lord swears an oath by the pride of Jacob. Remembering the intercession made by the prophet on behalf of a feeble Jacob in 7:2 and 7:5 and then hearing the Lord swear by the pride of Jacob in 8:7a, the text-immanent reader appreciates the change in Jacob's situation. Moreover, witnessing all the deceitful ways of Israel, the text-immanent reader recognises the fairness of the divine punishment. He feels the swearing and punishments are just responses to the outrages perpetrated by Israel. Unfortunately, he was called to witness justice being dispensed. During the downfall of Israel he saw: (i) the trembling of the earth and a great deluge (8:8), (ii) how the Lord causes the sun to set at noon and darkens the earth in broad daylight (8:9c–d), (iii) the lamentation instead of laughter (8:10b), sackcloth instead of beautiful garments (8:10c) and baldness of every head (8:10d), (iv) famine on earth (8:11c–f), people wandering to and fro seeking the word of the Lord in vain (8:12a–d), the fainting from thirst of young men and women (8:13a) and their seeking after other gods like Dan, and following the way of Beersheba (8:14c–e).

Placing himself as a close observer of what is happening, very often the text-immanent reader has to respond to various situations in the text. For instance, the text addresses the text-immanent reader through the rhetorical question of the Lord, *will I forget any of their glorious deeds* (8:7b). The question, which is formulated in the third person form concerns the people of Israel, rather than addressing them directly in the second person 'you'-figure manner. The text-immanent reader is invited to answer the question affirmatively. The use of the third person *their* contrasts with the previously used first person *my people Israel*, and demonstrates a diminishment in the level of intimacy in the relationship between the Lord and the people of Israel.

Finally, in the fifth vision, through the eyes of the 'I'-figure, the text-immanent reader saw the Lord standing at the altar announcing punishments to be inflicted on Israel. With the eyes of the Lord upon them and with the punishments being so overwhelming, any thoughts of escaping the wrath of the Lord are futile. This is a frightening experience for the text-immanent reader and therefore, feeling threatened, he wants to avoid the divine judgements

by distancing himself from the behaviour of Israel that invited punishments and damaged the intimate relationship with the Lord.

7.3.2 Communication: Amaziah–Amos Confrontation

That the communication in 7:10a–17f is set in a narrative framework, is attested by the number of narrative *wayyiqtol*-forms found in the unit. By using the narrative form וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶמַּצְיָאֵל (and then Amaziah sent, 7:10a), the text-immanent author introduces the communication. Central to this communication are Amaziah, the high priest of Bethel, and Amos, the prophet. However, it is to be noted that neither is addressed by the text-immanent author. Rather, he communicates the conversation that takes place between these two characters. Even though there is neither a specific addressee nor a recipient in the form of a second person ‘you’-figure present, the text-immanent reader is found in the vicinity of the text. He notices a disagreement between the characters Amaziah and Amos. The clash emerges at the very beginning of their confrontation. Firstly, Amaziah sends word to Jeroboam, the King of Israel (7:10a) that Amos was conspiring against him among his own people. In order to strengthen his argument and to convince Jeroboam, quoting words which he claims were those spoken by Amos himself: *Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go into exile from its land* (7:11b–c). These words leave the text-immanent reader confused. Is Amaziah quoting Amos correctly? If so, prior to this narrative where did Amos speak about the King’s death and about exile? If he did not, why does Amaziah lie?⁴³⁶ These are the questions to which the text-immanent reader seeks answers. Before the narration, nowhere in the text does the text-immanent reader find Amos either speaking against the King or predicting the exile of Israel. He notices only the powerful mediation of Amos on behalf of Jacob. Nevertheless, as a witness to the visions, the text-immanent reader is aware of the statement of the Lord made against Jeroboam in 7:9c: *I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword*. Therefore, the text-immanent reader realizes that it was not Amos, but the Lord who spoke against Jeroboam. Consequently, the authenticity of Amaziah’s claim is challenged and ironically the text-immanent reader sees the statement of Amaziah as a conspiracy. Furthermore, the text-immanent reader remains unaware of any

⁴³⁶ Linville, “Visions and Voices,” 33–34, proposes that Amaziah somewhat incorrectly expresses the meaning of the third vision’s verdict against King Jeroboam, but there is no clear account of Amos’ communication against the King.

reaction, or lack thereof, to the claims made Amaziah about Amos. However, Amaziah's command to Amos to flee to Judah and to stop prophesying in Bethel generates certain doubts in the mind of the text-immanent reader. Is it because of this command that no further prophetic mediation is to be seen in the third, fourth and fifth visions? Does Amaziah act according to the direction of Jeroboam? If not, does he act out of jealousy? Specifically: is he envious of the prophet? The demand by Amaziah that Amos stops prophesying in Bethel contradicts his own acceptance of Amos as a seer, in 7:12b. Even though the text-immanent reader receives no answer, he looks on the acts of Amaziah with suspicion. Moreover, being aware of the Lord's declarations against the sanctuaries of Israel (7:9b) and against Jeroboam (7:9c), the text-immanent reader could hear Amaziah's voice in 7:13c–d (*for this is the sanctuary of the King and this is the house of the kingdom*) somewhat sarcastically.

After all the confusions the text-immanent reader observes events which are much more straightforward and easily understood. One such example is when Amos confronts Amaziah directly, bravely rejecting his demand to flee to Judah to prophesy. The strength of his reply is marked by the *אֲנִי* usages (*I am not a prophet and I am not a son of a prophet for I am a cattle raiser*, 7:14c–e). Moreover, he speaks to Amaziah about the divine initiative in his call (*the LORD took me from behind the small cattle*, 7:15a) and the decree he received from the Lord to prophesy to the people of Israel (7:15b–c). All these brave explanations of Amos confirm to the text-immanent reader that Amaziah is not being truthful with Jeroboam. All of the prophetic acts of Amos are justified by the divine initiative in his prophetic call and by his insistence that at all times he was responding to that call.

Amos takes the role of a prophet in 7:16a–17f, asking Amaziah to take heed of the word of the Lord. It is the first time a second person addressee appears in the Amaziah–Amos encounter and 7:16a–17f is formulated entirely in the second person form. The embedded direct speech which occurs in 7:16c–d records a former speech of Amaziah to Amos. Hence, exposed for the text-immanent reader to see, is Amaziah's attitude to the Lord. He banned the prophet from prophesying and, by implication, dismissed the word of the Lord. Therefore, the text-immanent reader feels that the punishments announced against Israel were brought about by Amaziah's rejection of the prophetic activity, and thus by the divine

initiative behind it. This brings the text-immanent reader to realise that these punishments could be the fate of anyone who acts in this way.

Other than the characters Amaziah, Amos, Jeroboam and the Lord, Israel appears several times in the Amaziah–Amos confrontation. The first reference is found in 7:10b where Israel appears in relation to Jeroboam, the King of Israel. Amaziah complains that Amos conspired against the King of Israel among the King's own subjects. The second is also in connection with the King and Israel (7:11b–c). Amaziah says that Amos has predicted the death of Jeroboam and the exile of Israel. The third reference is rather interesting because it appears in a direct speech of the Lord and contains the expression *my people Israel* (7:15d). This is a positive expression reflecting the intimate relationship between the Lord and Israel. Israel appears for the fourth time in 7:16c where Amos, in the role of prophet, quotes a demand of Amaziah that Amos should stop prophesying in Israel. And finally Israel appears in 7:17f, where it receives exile as the punishment from the Lord. That indeed confirms the severing of the intimate bond between the Lord and the people of Israel.

7.3.3 Communication: Assurance of Consolation

After seeing the visions through the eyes of the 'I'-figure, the text-immanent reader is left in no doubt about the seriousness of the message that evildoers will no longer escape the wrath of the Lord. In this context, the communication about the Lord by the text-immanent author found in unit 9:5a–6e made a profound impression on the text-immanent reader. This communication convinced him of the power of the Lord to execute the punishments pronounced against Israel. The Lord is depicted with such great power and might, that when He touches the earth it melts and the inhabitants are left in tears. Added to that, he can call on his power to summon the waters of the sea and to flood the land. He is the creator of heaven and earth as well. Moreover, the climatic declaration, *the Lord is his name* in 9:6e confirms to the text-immanent reader that, having complete authority and being all-powerful, the Lord will execute his judgements without hesitation. The text-immanent reader feels vulnerable because he does not witness any prophetic mediation or any alternative proposal that might persuade the Lord not to proceed with his decisions to punish the people of Israel. Therefore, the text-immanent reader is conscious of the omnipotence of the Lord, including his power to inflict and execute punishment.

The communication-setting in 9:5a–6e is centred on the description of the Lord and is formulated entirely in third person forms (*he-formulations*). However, a dramatic change occurs in 9:8b–c where the *he-formulations* are replaced by the Lord appearing in an ‘I’-figure form. In addition, the text-immanent author renders the direct speech of the Lord. A number of interrogative questions constitute this direct speech in 9:7a–f, which is soon interrupted by the verbless speech formula *נֹאֲמֵי-יְהוָה* in 9:7c. In the first rhetorical question the Lord in an ‘I’-figure form addresses a ‘you’-figure in 9:7a. Since it is not explained who this ‘you’-figure is, the text-immanent reader suspects that he is the one being addressed. However, he soon realizes from the vocative in 9:7b that he in fact is not being addressed, but rather the sons of Israel. Being the close observer of the text he regretfully notices a shift in the relationship between the Lord and the people of Israel. Instead of *my people Israel* the question is *are you not like the sons of the Cushite to me?* This detached tone in the words of the Lord is a learning moment for the text-immanent reader.⁴³⁷ The Lord continues his questions in 9:7d, 7e and 7f, however he addresses neither Israel nor anyone else. The people of Israel are no longer mentioned in the vocative form, rather they are specified in the objective noun form in the rhetorical question in 9:7d (*have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt?*). The question implicitly conveys the failure of Israel to appreciate the involvement of the Lord in their deliverance from Egypt. Subsequently, the frustration and disappointment of the Lord is well revealed in this communication-setting. Since no one is addressed, the text-immanent reader has no option other than to acknowledge that he is the addressee and, as such, must answer to the Lord affirmatively.

Rather than providing clarity in regard to the situation of the text-immanent reader, the announcement in 9:8b–c by the text-immanent author of further punishments being brought down on Israel, serves only to make matters even more complicated. As the direct speech of the text-immanent author lacks an introduction, the question of the addressee arises, with the text-immanent reader being invited to consider his position. Nevertheless, the concluding speech formula *אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* occurs in 9:15d. This is significant for a number of reasons: the presence of the *verbum dicendi* *אָמַר*, the inclusion of the second person suffix *אֱלֹהֵינוּ* as

⁴³⁷ There is no reason at all for Israel to believe that it would be exempt from the shock of the Lord’s indignation due to its evil behaviour. See Rodney Steven Sadler Jr., *Can a Cushite Change His Skin?: An Examination of Race, Ethnicity, and Othering in the Hebrew Bible*, LHBOTS 425 (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 45.

part of *אָלֹהֵיךָ יְהוָה*, and finally the appearance of an addressee in the form of the ‘you’-figure. However, the text provides no clues as to the identity of this ‘you’-figure and consequently the text-immanent reader is challenged to be identified.⁴³⁸ By employing the expression *אָלֹהֵיךָ* (*your God*) in the text, the text-immanent author firmly attests the position of the text-immanent reader in the text. In addition, it indicates that the intimacy of the relationship between the Lord and Israel has been restored. The announcement of the text-immanent author in 9:8a *behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom* conveys to the text-immanent reader that Israel is a sinful kingdom and that the Lord will be watching them closely and also that he should avoid their sinful ways at all costs. However, the text-immanent reader gradually obtains consolation in the words of the Lord: (i) Though the Lord vowed to destroy the sinful kingdom, he added that he would not completely destroy the house of Jacob. The text-immanent reader is convinced that it is not their destruction that he seeks, but their return. (ii) He is pleased to see the gradual restoration of the broken relationship between the Lord and the people of Israel. Hearing the expressions *my people* in 9:10a, *who are called by my name* in 9:12b and *I will turn the captivity of my people Israel* in 9:14a, the text-immanent reader is relieved because he had often been saddened by the fracturing of the strong bond that existed between the Lord and the people of Israel. (iii) When the text-immanent author conveys the communication of the Lord with regard to the restoration of Israel, the text-immanent reader is greatly consoled. Moreover, for the text-immanent reader this assurance from the Lord is more solid than the assurance given to the people of Israel because the text-immanent reader was well-informed about the immediacy of the Lord’s judgement. (iv) Above all, through the concluding speech formula *אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ* (*said the LORD your God*) the text-immanent reader is directly addressed and comforted by the promises of renewal, notwithstanding the previous judgements.

⁴³⁸ For a detailed discussion on the possibilities of the identity of the addressees in *אָלֹהֵיךָ* (9:15d), see Park, *The book of Amos as Composed and Read in Antiquity*, 53–64. He discusses all possibilities, including the text-immanent reader. See also Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, “‘.....’, Heeft de Heer, Jouw God, Gezegd: Amos 9:15d als Sleutel tot Leesopties in het Amosboek,” (uitgesproken bij de openbare aanvaarding van het ambt van Hoogleraar Oude Testament aan Tilburg University, Tilburg, 23 March 2018), 5–40, also speaks about the double exegetical problem, the direct speech which is marked by this clause, and also the identity of the speaker and the addressee, which arises in 9:15d. He suggests three reading options: (i) the Lord is speaking about himself, (ii) the text-immanent author is addressing the text-immanent reader, and (iii) the character Amos is the speaker and the character Amaziah is the addressee. See also van Wieringen, “Communicatiegeoriënteerde Exegese en Tekstuele Identiteit,” 34–38; van Wieringen, “Two Reading Options in Psalm 114: A Communication-Oriented Analysis,” *RB* 122 (2015): 46–47.

7.3.4 Summary

The table below provides an overview of the communicative elements in unit 7:1–9:15.

unit	text-immanent author	addressee	time of speaking	message communicated
7:1a–3c	prophet	no one is addressed directly (it could be the text-immanent reader)	now-moment	vision
7:4a–6c	prophet	no one is addressed directly (it could be the text-immanent reader)	now-moment	vision
5:7a–9c	prophet	no one is addressed directly (it could be the text-immanent reader)	now-moment	vision
7:10a–17f	text-immanent author	no one is addressed	past perspective	Amaziah–Amos clash
8:1a–3e	prophet	no one is addressed directly (it could be the text-immanent reader)	now-moment	vision
8:4a–14g	prophet	‘you’-figure (the people of Israel)	now-moment	accusation + punishments
9:1a–4d	prophet	no one is addressed directly (it could be the text-immanent reader)	now-moment	vision
9:5a–6e	prophet	no one is addressed directly (it could be the text-immanent reader)	now-moment	description of the Lord
9:7a–f	the Lord	the sons of Israel + text-immanent reader	now-moment	rhetorical questions by the Lord
9:8a–15d	prophet and the Lord	‘you’-figure (text-immanent reader)	now-moment	restoration and blessings

- In 7:1a–3c and 4a–6c, the Lord begins the communication by giving a vision to the ‘I’-figure, who in turn reports the vision. Because of the fact that no one is addressed specifically, the position of the text-immanent reader acquires greater significance. Through

the eyes of the 'I'-figure, he observes the locusts and fire and understands that the divine judgement is close at hand. He was comforted by witnessing the effectiveness of the powerful mediation of the 'I'-figure in influencing the Lord's decision not to proceed with the punishments.

- In 7:7a–9c, as in the previous two units, by granting a vision to the 'I'-figure (identified as Amos), the Lord begins the communication. However, Amos, who reports on the vision, does not address anyone in particular and, therefore, the situation of the text-immanent reader is similar to that of an addressee. Through the eyes of the 'I'-figure the text-immanent reader saw the Lord standing beside a wall with a plumb-line in his hand and heard his powerful voice announcing various punishments. Trembling with fear, the text-immanent reader waited for prophetic mediation, however, it never came and therefore, he was plunged into a dangerous situation.

- The text-immanent author starts the communication in 7:10a–17f by narrating a confrontation between Amaziah and Amos, however without addressing anyone. The text-immanent reader, who witnesses the conflict from the beginning, realizes the falsehoods in Amaziah's report to Jeroboam about Amos. In contrast, he was entirely convinced of the divine initiative in Amos' prophetic call. In addition, through the Amaziah character, the text-immanent author conveyed to the text-immanent reader the idea of staying away from wicked ways in order to avoid the punishment Amaziah received.

- The fourth vision, described in 8:1a–3e and the prophetic speech which follows in 8:4a–14g, once again convincingly conveyed to the text-immanent reader the immediacy in the Lord's judgement in relation to the people of Israel. For the first time the people of Israel are addressed and their response is revealed. They deceived their fellow human beings. Moreover, they did not care for the people entrusted to their care, but instead oppressed and exploited them in order to satisfy their own greed and their hunger for wealth and power. Therefore, the text-immanent reader realizes and acknowledges the fairness of the divine punishments that destroy the wealth accumulated by the powerful through unjust ways by unjust means.

- In the final vision in 9:1–4, the text-immanent reader understands that the judgement of the Lord will be total and therefore that no one can hide from it or escape.

- The epilogue 9:5–15 has two addressees: the sons of Israel in 9:7 and the text-immanent reader as a ‘you’-figure in 9:15. The sons of Israel are taken to task by the Lord for not recognizing his interventions in their life. Nevertheless, the text-immanent reader hears the consoling words of the Lord about the restoration of Israel.

7.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Following on from the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic analysis, this final part explores the role of the Lord from two points of view: communication by the Lord, and communication about the Lord.

➤ The communication by the Lord, as it occurs in three areas, namely the visions, the Amaziah–Amos confrontation and the epilogue, is evaluated. The first task is to determine how effectively or otherwise, the words of the Lord in the visions reflect his role and function.

(i) even in the midst of the judgements the Lord shows great concern for Israel

Though the words of the Lord reveal the sense that punishments were imminent, his affection for the people of Israel can also be detected. When Amos intercedes on behalf of them and implores the Lord not to punish them by sending down locusts and fire, he relents. The words of the Lord *לֹא תִהְיֶה* (*it will not happen*) in 7:3b and 6b offer reassurance to Amos.

The Lord’s concern for Israel is manifested in a variety of ways:

- (a) The punishments by means of locusts and fire are cancelled.
- (b) The Lord responds positively to the prophet’s intercessions, demonstrating his willingness to forgive his chosen people.
- (c) Despite their unwillingness to turn back to him, the Lord’s compassion for his people prevails.
- (d) The Lord relenting indicates that the primary aim of the punishments is not to destroy the people of Israel, but to save them.
- (e) The decision to withdraw the punishments is a sign of the Lord’s affection for his people.
- (f) The Lord acceding to Amos’ requests for leniency attests the affinity between the two.

Other instances which confirm the Lord's affection for Israel include the use of the expression *יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמִּי* (*my people Israel*) in *יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמִּי בְּקֶרֶב עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*behold, I set a plumb-line in midst of my people Israel*, 7:8g) and in *בָּא הַקֵּץ אֶל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל* (*the end has come upon my people Israel*, 8:2g).

(ii) the judgement is imminent and the Lord appears with great power

It is clear, however, that in the subsequent visions the Lord's patience with Israel has run out. He is no longer prepared to overlook their wrongdoing (7:8h and 8:2h). Realising this, and knowing that justice must prevail, Amos does not appeal to the Lord for clemency. The severity of the promised punishments reflects the great sense of disappointment felt by the Lord.

The high places of Isaac⁴³⁹ and the sanctuaries of Israel are about to be destroyed (7:9a–b). Even King Jeroboam will die by the sword (7:9c). Devastation will befall Israel. The earth will tremble and everyone who dwells on it will mourn (8:8a–c). The people are alarmed when the Lord declares that he will turn the songs of their palaces into wailing and lamentation (8:3a, 10a–b), and their feasts into mourning (8:10a). He leaves Israel in no doubt as to the level of his power when he announces that he will make the sun set at noon and turn daylight into darkness (8:9c–d). The text-immanent reader appreciates the might of the Lord and realises that any further intervention by Amos on behalf of Israel would be futile. Knowing what awaited Israel, and with no prospect of escape from the judgement of the Lord, both Amos and the text-immanent reader are left to ponder this perilous situation.

Second, in the Amaziah–Amos confrontation the Lord speaks to both, but not in the same manner. While he speaks directly to Amos, there is no direct engagement with Amaziah. Amos, having been commissioned to prophesy to the people of Israel (7:15b–d), functions as an agent of the Lord. Following the confrontation, the Lord speaks indirectly to both, siding with the righteous one(s). The words spoken to Amaziah are words of condemnation of his wicked ways and disobedience, and of the resultant punishments. The irony is that Amaziah, who as high priest should be receiving blessings from the Lord, instead receives

⁴³⁹ Outside Genesis, the name Isaac is seldom used, with Amos being an exception. See Thang, "The Theology of the Land in Amos 7–9," 75–78. Also for an examination of the importance of twice mentioning Isaac in Amos 7:9 and 7:17, see Christo Lombaard, "What is Isaac Doing in Amos 7?" *OTE* 17 (2004): 435–42.

punishments. These punishments and the Lord's command to Amos are interlinked. Amaziah orders Amos to disobey the words of the Lord in an attempt to prevent him from prophesying against Israel. Hence, punishment is both inevitable and justified. Like Amos and Amaziah, the text-immanent reader is a recipient of the words of the Lord, though not of those received by Amaziah. Again, these are indirectly received. It is to be noted also, that the text-immanent reader has access to the Lord's words from the beginning of the book of Amos.

Thirdly, the communication by the Lord in the epilogue is analysed. Here the tone and circumstances have changed completely. No further punishments are pronounced, with any declarations of such being replaced by reasons for optimism. Situations of anger and frustration (7:8h; 8:2h), condemnation (7:8g and 8:2g), desolation and devastation (7:9a–b; 9:1d–f), assassination (7:9c; 8:3c; 9:1g, 4c), lamentations and woes (8:3a, 8b, 10a–d), destruction (8:8d–f), famine (8:11), and captivity (9:2a–3f) are turned into a state of peace and tranquillity. The Lord assures the people that he will raise up the booth of David, repair the breaches and restore it to what it was in the old days (9:11a–d).⁴⁴⁰ In addition, he promises to return those taken into captivity, guaranteeing them that they will no more be plucked from their own land (9:14a, 15a–c). What's more, Israel will be blessed with prosperity and abundance instead of suffering deprivation and lamentation.

In short, it can be said that the Lord–Israel relationship produced a range of emotions. On the one hand the Lord is very concerned about the people and cherishes them as his own. On the other hand, however, transgressions prompt the Lord to pronounce punishments against them. Yet, even given all of their wrongdoings and rejections of his commands, he never abandons them, but instead bestows blessings on them and promises a brighter future. Not only does the nature of the Lord–Israel relationship become clear in this section, but light is shed on the Lord–prophet relationship as well. The Lord is the one who initiates the prophecies and his presence is felt in each. The text teaches that the Lord–Amaziah relationship should be taken as a serious warning for anyone who acts contrary to the commands of the Lord.

⁴⁴⁰ Walter C. Kaiser, "The Davidic Promise and the Inclusion of the Gentiles (Amos 9:9–15 and Acts 15:13–18): A Test Passage for Theological Systems," *JETS* 20 (1977): 102, notes the phrase *as it was in days of old* and remarks that it is a reminder of the promise in 2 Sam 7:11, 12, 16 where the Lord had affirmed that he would raise up David's offspring to kingship and a dynasty that would continue to exist.

Amos reports receiving five visions from the Lord, each one prefaced by the positive declaration *כֹּה הֵרָאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה* (*the Lord GOD showed me*). The first of these in 7:1a is the beginning of the communication about the Lord. As with the communication by the Lord, this is arranged under the headings: the visions, the Amaziah–Amos confrontation and the epilogue. A short account of the prophetic usages of the divine speech formulas, which serves to emphasise the communication by the Lord, is attached.

The various ways in which the Lord is depicted in the visions is analysed in the following section.

(i) the Lord as one who is going to punish

In the first two visions the Lord is seen as the one preparing to punish Israel: the Lord forms locusts to destroy the crops (7:1b) and calls down fire (7:4b–c) to devour the land. Then, in the third vision, the Lord is seen holding a plumb-line in his hand (7:7c), the intention being to demolish Israel. Seeing a basket of summer fruit in the fourth vision (8:2e), Amos is convinced that Israel's continued existence is in doubt, while in the fifth vision Amos sees the Lord himself passing judgement on Israel. The level of the Lord's fury can be gauged from the severity of the predicted punishments, along with the declaration that no one would be spared: there would be no escape. The harsh tone of the pronouncements communicates very well how precarious the situation is, in which Israel now finds itself. The expression, *the days are about to come* (8:11a), convey the message that bitter days lie ahead.

(ii) the Lord relents

On two separate occasions, following the intercessions of the prophet, the Lord relents and changes his decision regarding the punishments. This suggests two things:

(a) The Lord accedes to the call of Amos to revoke the punishments because his attachment to the prophet is so great. It is legitimate, therefore, that both the Lord, who issues the commands, and the prophet, who obeys the word, should act accordingly. A peculiar aspect of this episode is that the request by the prophet is made on behalf of the very people who are the intended recipients of the prophecy.

(b) The Lord is deeply concerned about the welfare of Israel. Though it is not stated whether or not Israel has repented and turned back to the Lord, he, in response to the pleadings of the

prophet, who repeatedly lays great emphasis on the weakness of Jacob, relents and agrees to withdraw the punishments.

(iii) the Lord sends famine, a hunger for the word of the Lord

This punishment differs greatly from other punishments inflicted on Israel, and in various ways it impacts their life, security and wealth. However, this punishment is unique in that it puts the focus on the importance of the word of the Lord. The absence of this word is a strong signal that communication from the Lord has ended, and can be interpreted as his complete detachment from the people. With all attempts by Israel to seek the Lord being in vain, neither words of consolation nor words of guidance are to be heard. This silence from the Lord serves to expose the futility of the people placing their trust in the god Dan and the hopelessness of the affinity between them and the ways of Beersheba. While these are ultimately doomed, the word of the Lord will continue forever. That is to say, the people have abandoned what is everlasting in favour of something that is only fleeting.⁴⁴¹

In the Amaziah–Amos confrontation the Lord is described as the one who initiates the prophetic call to Amos, who gives an account of his life before that call. When Amaziah refers to him as ‘seer,’ Amos is at pains to remind him that he was not a prophet and that he neither inherited the role, going on to say that previously he had reared cattle and worked as a gatherer of sycamore figs. This calling by the Lord to be a prophet is not only significant, but would have come as a complete surprise to Amos.

In the epilogue, the Lord is given the elaborate title אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה הַצֹּבָאוֹת (*the Lord GOD of hosts*, 9:5a) which manifests his majesty. The combination of the terms שָׁמַיִם (*heaven*) and אֶרֶץ (*earth*) in 9:6 implies that the Lord is ruler, not only over the heavens, but also over the earth, that is, the Lord of all.⁴⁴² As the Lord who builds his staircases in the heavens and places his vaults upon the earth, his fervent wish is that everything on earth should be in accord with all that is in heaven. It seems that there are two options to choose from: either the earth is transformed so as to reflect the heavens, or the earth should cease to exist. The prophetic words in 9:5a–g, predicting destruction, imply that the people had failed to renounce their

⁴⁴¹ Once more the manner and behaviour of worshippers are declared to be reprehensible. For an analysis of Dan and Beersheba in Amos 8:14, see Bartusch, *Understanding Dan*, 230–42.

⁴⁴² MacComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*, 326–27.

evil ways and had not returned to the Lord. Thus, the earth would be submerged under a mighty flood (9:5b–g). The prophetic declaration *יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ* (*the LORD is his name*) in 9:6e, confirms the power and might of the Lord, which extends over all creation. When the prophet warns that the eyes of the Lord are upon the sinful kingdom (9:8a), it is clear that he is fully aware that the Lord has complete control over the fortunes of the earth.

➤ In their communications about the Lord, both the prophet and the text-immanent author use various divine names and divine speech formulas. These are listed in the table below.

divine naming	יְהוָה (7:1a, 2e, 4d, 5b, 6c, 8:1a, 3b, 9b, 11b, 9:8a), יְהוָה (7:8a, 15a, 15b, 16a, 17a, 8:2f, 7a, 11f, 12c, 9:6e, 7c, 8d, 12c, 13b), אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה הַצִּבְאוֹת (9:5a), יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (9:15d)
divine speech formula	אָמַר יְהוָה (7:3c), אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (7:6c), וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי (7:8a), וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי (7:8f), וַיֹּאמֶר 2x (8:2a, 9:1c), וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי (8:3b, 9b, 11b, 9:7c, 8d), וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי (8:2f), וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה (8:3b, 9b, 11b, 9:7c, 8d), וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (9:12c, 13b), וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (9:15d)

In order to get a complete understanding of the communication about the Lord, an analysis of the divine names and the divine speech formulas is necessary. The repeated expressions *כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה* (*thus the Lord GOD showed me*) in 7:1a, 4a, 7a, 8:1a and the expression *רָאִיתִי אֶת-אֲדֹנָי* (*I saw the Lord*) in 9:1a serve as an introduction to the prophetic reports on the five visions, and confirm that each comes from the Lord. The concluding speech formulas *אָמַר יְהוָה* (*said the LORD*) in 7:3c and *אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה* (*said the Lord GOD*) in 7:6c, refer to the Lord's decision to refrain from sending locusts and fire as punishment. The two formulas *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי* (*the LORD asked me*, 7:8a) and *וַיֹּאמֶר* (*he (the Lord) asked*, 8:2a) in the third and fourth visions, where the Lord addresses Amos, ask him what it is he has seen. *וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי* (*the Lord said*) in 7:8f, is also an introductory formula for the announcement by the Lord that he is not prepared to forgive the sons of Israel ever again. This explains a decision to set a plumb-line in their midst. A similar declaration by the Lord that he will no longer spare them and that

their end is imminent is introduced by and concludes with the speech formulas וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי (then the LORD said to me) in 8:2f and נֹאם יְהוָה אֵלַי (utterance of the Lord GOD) in 8:3b respectively. Interestingly, this also occurs in 8:7b–9a when the Lord swears an oath against Israel, and where the introductory speech formula נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּגִאוֹן יַעֲקֹב (the LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob) in 8:7a and the concluding speech formula נֹאם יְהוָה אֵלַי (utterance of the Lord GOD) in 8:9b are employed. Furthermore, the Lord sounds an ominous warning of bitter days to come when he will change day into night and feasts into mourning. The prophet, by using the formula נֹאם יְהוָה אֵלַי in 8:11b, lays great emphasis on this note of caution. The introductory formula וַיֹּאמֶר (he said) in 9:1c refers to the punishments that are announced in the fifth vision, while the formula נֹאם יְהוָה אֵלַי (utterance of the Lord GOD) in 9:7c and 9:8d express the Lord's dissatisfaction with Israel. The three concluding formulas in 9:12c, 13b and 15d differ from previous formulas in that they refer to blessings bestowed on, and promises made to Israel by the Lord. However, most of the speech formulas convey judgements against Israel.

As in the case of the communication by the Lord, the communication about the Lord confirms that it is his intention to punish the people of Israel. However, the prophet is conscious of the Lord's concern for both himself and the people. This concern for Amos stems from the fact that it was the Lord himself who raised him to the status of prophet. It was not something gained by inheritance, which was the norm. Amos stood before the power of the Lord and, using the majestic title 'Lord God of hosts' professes that the Lord is his name, thereby acknowledging his supremacy. For the most part, the divine speech formulas employed by the prophet and by the text-immanent author emphasise the predicted punishments. However, the intention is that they be seen to be constructive rather than destructive. Towards the end of the text they become more positive, and the conclusion to be drawn from this is that the Lord will never abandon his people.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ROLE OF THE LORD

Having earlier presented a text-linguistic analysis of the book of Amos, one which concentrates on text-syntax, text-semantics and text-pragmatics, this concluding chapter focuses on the character of the Lord and explores the development in the role of the Lord from a communication perspective. As the prophecies, communicated through the prophet Amos to the people of Israel, are divine messages, it is evident that the Lord is the key-figure in the book. The relationship that exists between the Lord, the prophet and the nations becomes clear as the prophet continues to carry out his duty to prophesy. The level of communication between the Lord and Israel and Judah (the people of God) is much higher than that between the Lord and any of the other nations. Therefore, in order to understand the role of the Lord in regard to the different levels of communication, I propose in this section to examine them from the point of view of the engagement between: (i) the Lord and the prophet, (ii) the Lord and the people of God (Israel and Judah), (iii) the Lord and the foreign nations. The role of the text-immanent reader will also be examined in this chapter as it is through this reader that the real reader engages with the text.

8.1 THE LORD–PROPHET ENGAGEMENT

The engagement between the Lord and the prophet Amos begins in 1:1a–2e, firstly with the scene received by Amos about Israel, and then when he speaks about that vision.

And then he (Amos) said, the LORD roars from Zion and from Jerusalem he utters his voice, and the pastures of the shepherds will mourn and the top of Carmel will wither (1:2a–e).

This is an astonishing introduction to the Lord, but without sufficient information for illustrating the Lord–prophet relationship. As he (Amos) paints this depressing picture of Israel, the anger in his voice is palpable. This stirs him into action. Confirmation that he has become a spokesperson for the Lord comes with the use of the technical expression כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (*thus said the LORD*) in 1:3a as opposed to the phrase וַיֹּאמֶר (he [Amos] said) in 1:2a. He faithfully proclaims the word of the Lord, denouncing the crimes of the neighbouring

nations and warning of the resulting chastisements: Damascus (1:3a–5e), Gaza (1:6a–8e), Tyre (1:9a–10b), Edom (1:11a–12b), Ammon (1:13a–15b), and Moab (2:1a–3c). He then turns his attention to Judah (2:4a–5b) and Israel (2:6a–16b), declaring that they too will suffer punishments. Yet it is still unclear what kind of relationship exists between the Lord and the prophet.

A dramatic development occurs in 3:7b–c. *The Lord GOD does not make a word if he has not revealed his confidential conversation to his servants, the prophets.* The employment of the phrases אִם-נִגְלָה (if he has not revealed), סִדּוֹר (his confidential conversation), and אֶל-עֲבָדָיו (to his servants, the prophets) provide evidence that a close bond has been firmly established between them. The action of the Lord in revealing his secret to the prophet emphasizes the growing level of intimacy in their relationship. In 3:8a–d it is evident that the one who is chosen to be a prophet has responsibilities which he must fulfil: *a lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken; who will not prophesy?* (3:8a–d). When the Lord speaks to Amos he must respond. He is duty-bound to prophesy; he cannot refuse to do so. This is the first indication of the existence of such a close Lord–prophet relationship. If 3:7a–8d is considered to be the theory, then its application is seen in 3:9a–15d. The Lord twice speaks directly to Amos: שְׁמִיעוּ וְאָמְרוּ (*make [it] heard and say*) in 3:9a–b and שְׁמָעוּ וְהָעִידוּ (*hear and testify*) in 3:13a–b. Here he explicitly directs the prophet to convey his message to the people of Israel, something to which Amos accedes. It is attested in 3:11a–e and 3:12a–d that, given the nature of the warnings and despite not knowing how his words would be received, he fearlessly proclaims the word of the Lord. This underlines the fact that, notwithstanding the level of intimacy that exists between the Lord and the prophet, their relationship is very much a Lord–servant one.

The opening verses of chapter four continue in the same vein as 3:13a–15d. The prophet demands attention from פָּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן (*cows of Bashan*) insisting that they listen to הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה (*this word*). The Lord swears an oath (וַיִּשְׁבַּע) that they will pay dearly for their sinful ways. This is evident from the harsh warnings delivered in 4:2b–3c. Here is a further sign of the prophet faithfully adhering to the task of proclaiming the word of the Lord regardless of any possible consequences for himself, however, all of which failed to bring the people back to the Lord (4:6a–11f). Therefore, the Lord declares in blunt terms that he has other plans, giving the impression that something more severe is about to befall the people: לִכְנּוּ כֹה אֶעֱשֶׂה-לָּהֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל

(*therefore, thus, I will do to you, Israel*, 4:12a–b). This confrontation of the Lord is heightened by the prophetic demand that immediately follows in 4:12d–e: *הַכּוֹן לִקְרַאת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ* (*be prepared to meet your God*).

Chapter five brings an increasing sense of impending disaster. The prophet speaks of the depths to which Israel has fallen with little or no prospect of it ever rising again. *She is fallen, no more to rise virgin Israel. She is forsaken on her soil, there is none to raise her up* (5:2a–f). However, what little hope remains can be found by seeking the Lord. Both the Lord and the prophet exhort Israel in this regard with the words of the prophet echoing those of the Lord: *דַּרְשׁוּנִי וְחַיִּי* (*seek me and live*, 5:4a–b), *דַּרְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וְחַיִּי* (*seek the LORD and live*, 5:6a–b). Pleading with the people to seek good and to turn away from evil, he offers a ray of hope that, if justice should prevail, there is the possibility that they may yet receive the graciousness of the Lord (5:14a–15d). However, failure to respond positively can only end in disaster. A clear warning is given by the Lord: *there is wailing in all places ... for I pass through your midst* (5:16b–17b). The prophet continues: *alas! who desire the day of the LORD! (5:18a–b) Will not the day of the LORD be darkness and not light, even dark and no brightness in it? (5:20a–d)*. If the visit of the Lord brings wailing, then the day of the Lord will not be better. The prophet affirms that it will be filled with complete darkness and danger.⁴⁴³

Both the Lord and the prophet leave Israel in no doubt that, despite its position as the chosen people, they face destruction if they continue to defy the Lord's commands. If they choose that path, then a future devoid of hope awaits them. In each of the above verses the words of the prophet echo those of the Lord, providing ample evidence that a close relationship has been firmly established between them. Further examples of this bond can be seen in 5:26a–27c. The Lord orders the people to carry Sakkuth and Kaiwan into exile (5:26a–b). The prophet supports this by confirming that the Lord is the one who speaks and that God of hosts is his name (5:27c). Equally in chapter nine the divine declaration *I will set my eye upon them for evil and not for good* (9:4d) is affirmed by the prophet: *behold, the eyes of the*

⁴⁴³ On this point Mayhue remarks, “according to Amos, day of the Lord is not a day of delight but of darkness—a day of gloom not gladness.” See Richard L. Mayhue, “The Prophet’s Watchword: Day of the Lord,” *Grace Theological Journal* 6 (1985): 238.

Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom (9:8a). Here again, the Lord and the prophet are seen to have a unity of purpose, and that the words of the prophet echo those of the Lord.

The communication that occurred between the Lord and Amos during the visions (see 7.2.1), along with the repeated expression *כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה* (*the LORD God showed me*) in 7:1, 4, 7, 8:1, are further indications of the intimate and complementary nature of their relationship. The diagram below illustrates the interaction that occurs between the Lord and the prophet during the five visions (chapters 7–9).

<p>the first vision (7:1a–3c)</p> <p>Amos sees the Lord forming locusts to destroy the crops</p> <p>the prophet intercedes: Lord God forgive now</p> <p>the Lord relents, saying: it shall not be</p>
<p>the second vision (7:4a–6c)</p> <p>Amos sees the Lord calling on fire to destroy everything</p> <p>the prophet intercedes: Lord God cease please</p> <p>the Lord relents, saying: it also shall not be</p>
<p>the third vision (7:7a–9c)</p> <p>Amos sees the Lord standing by a wall with a plumb-line in his hand</p> <p>the Lord asks: what do you see, Amos?</p> <p>Amos replies: a plumb-line</p> <p>the Lord says: behold! I set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel</p>
<p>the fourth vision (8:1a–3e)</p> <p>a discourse concerning the Lord's judgement of the people of Israel</p> <p>the Lord asks: what do you see, Amos?</p> <p>Amos replies: a basket of summer fruit</p> <p>the Lord declares: the end has come upon my people Israel</p>
<p>the fifth vision (9:1a–4d)</p> <p>Amos sees the Lord standing by the altar and calling on the earth to be shaken to its foundations</p> <p>the Lord says: smite the capital and the thresholds may shake</p>

In the first two visions the prophet begs the Lord to forgive Israel. The Lord accedes to his requests and withdraws the threatened punishments.⁴⁴⁴ In the third and fourth visions there are no appeals for mercy. Similarly in the fifth vision Amos makes no request of the Lord to relent. This, however, is not an indication of any diminution in the relationship between them.⁴⁴⁵ On the contrary, when the Lord indicates to Amos how he intends to administer justice (7:8g–9c, 8:2g–3e, 9:1d–4d), it calls to mind the close contact between them, which was earlier suggested by the statement in 3:7a–c (*Indeed, the Lord GOD does not make a word if he has not revealed his confidential conversation to his servants, the prophets*). Whereas Amos is aware that with the Lord mercy is always a possibility, he also recognizes that grave offence has been caused to the Lord and justice must be considered. By not requesting clemency in the last three visions, Amos is indicating his sympathy for the Lord.

The prose passage (7:10a–17f), coming between the third and fourth visions, serves to confirm the strength and intimacy of the Lord–prophet relationship. Despite Amaziah’s attempts to silence him, Amos’ fearless response demonstrates his resolve to faithfully fulfil his duty to prophesy to the people of Israel.⁴⁴⁶ His uncompromising approach to dealing with Amaziah beautifully portrays his yes to the call of the Lord (7:15c–d).⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ In this regard, Radine, “Vision and Curse Aversion in the Book of Amos,” 92, describes Amos as a curse-avertter. Linville presents Amos as a successful intercessor for chilling visions of destruction. See James R. Linville, “Visions and Voices: Amos 7–9,” 408. However, the reverse happens later and Amos returns as a pronouncer of doom.

⁴⁴⁵ Radine, “Vision and Curse Aversion in the Book of Amos,” 85, mentions that it is a matter of fact that Amos does not intercede in both instances. Instead, he is drawn into and identifies himself with the imagery put forward by the Lord. Consequently, Amos participates in the divine action by identifying himself with the plumb-line in Amos 7:8 and with the summer fruit in 8:2.

⁴⁴⁶ Amos separates what Amaziah says and what the Lord says and dares to hurl bold words against Amaziah. See Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle, “The Covenant Lawsuit of the Prophet Amos: III 1–IV 13,” *VT* 21 (1971): 347; Masiwa Ragies Gunda, “The ‘Man of God Who Came from Judah’ (2 Kings 23:17–18): In Search of the Fate of Amos?” *Scriptura* 111 (2012): 521–22.

⁴⁴⁷ Asen, “No, Yes and Perhaps in Amos and the Yahwist,” 434.

8.1.1 Summary

- Establishing the Lord–prophet relationship

The LORD roars from Zion and from Jerusalem he utters his voice (1:2b–c). This is no gentle invitation to prophesy, however, he does not hesitate to announce and warn of impending punishments.

- A more intimate relationship is developed

The Lord GOD does not make a word if he has not revealed his confidential conversation to his servants, the prophets (3:7b–c).

- The prophet walks with the Lord and identifies with his word

Could two walk together, if they have not agreed? (3:3a–b). It is interesting to note the way the words of the prophet echo those of the Lord.

Lord: *therefore, thus, I will do to you, Israel, because I will do this to you (4:12a–c),*

Prophet: *be prepared to meet your God, Israel (4:12d–f).*

Lord: *seek me and live (5:4b–c),*

Prophet: *seek the LORD and live (5:6a–b).*

Lord: *I will set my eye upon them for evil and not for good (9:4d),*

Prophet: *behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom (9:8a).*

- Mutual dialogue

The visions reveal a remarkable development in the relationship. In the first and second visions the Lord recognizes the anguish in Amos' voice and agrees not to proceed with the punishments. In the third, fourth and fifth visions the prophet, realizing the Lord's patience has been tested to the limit, remains silent.

- The relationship reaches its zenith

The union between the Lord and the prophet reaches new heights during the confrontation between Amos and Amaziah. The bond between them is so strong that the prophet is willing to prophesy regardless of any personal risk.

8.2 THE LORD–PEOPLE OF GOD ENGAGEMENT

The engagement between the Lord and his people begins in 2:4. Dominant here is the portrayal of the Lord as one who judges and declares punishments against Judah (2:4a–5b) and Israel (2:6a–16b). Nevertheless, the relation between the Lord and his people is not clear here. A shift is perceived in 2:11d with the expression, בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*sons of Israel*). The very act of addressing the sons of Israel directly implies the existence of a relationship and this conceptual change to viewing sons of Israel as a people rather than as a nation is significant. It is to be noted that the Lord does not directly address any other nation in Amos' prophecy.

The question posed in 2:11c–d, הֲאֵף אֵין־זֹאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (*is this not so, sons of Israel*) seeks confirmation of the declarations of the Lord in 2:9a–11b.⁴⁴⁸ Most notable are the following statements: *I myself exterminated and destroyed the Amorite* (2:9a–e), *I brought you out from the land of Egypt and led you forty years in the wilderness* (2:10a–b), *I raised up prophets from your sons and Nazirites from your young men* (2:11a–b). These affirmations of the Lord are reminders of the wondrous deeds that he performed and of his personal care for them in the face of danger. It is worth noting the 'I-you' combination in 2:10a–11b, which highlights the close relationship which exists between the Lord and his people. The might of the Lord is displayed in the defeat of the powerful Amorites.

In addition, his great concern for the welfare of his people is evident in the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and in his raising of prophets and Nazirites from among them. All of this confirms the tremendous level of involvement of the Lord in their lives, and the demand – הֲאֵף אֵין־זֹאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (2:11c–d) – calls on the people of Israel to acknowledge this. Equally, this provides an opportunity for them to reflect on their relationship with the Lord and whether they have strayed and deviated from his commandments. The tone of this rhetorical question, in which a sense of the Lord's frustration and disappointment can be detected, points to ingratitude on the part of Israel, something necessitating repentance. The perception of the Lord's displeasure is heightened when he states, *but you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets, you shall not prophesy* (2:12a–d). This

⁴⁴⁸ The intention of such a question is not seeking a response but to make an emphatic declaration. For a discussion on the definition and implications of rhetorical questions, see Lénart J. de Regt, "Discourse Implications of Rhetorical Questions in Job, Deuteronomy and the Minor Prophets," in de Regt, Waard and Fokkelman, *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, 52–53. Cf. also Bart Koet and Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen, eds., *Asking Questions*, CBET (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming).

suggests a fracturing of their relationship, as they not only disobeyed the Lord, but also rejected what he had planned. The actions of the sons of Israel as outlined in 2:12a–d is the very antithesis of the Lord as found in 2:11a–b. It is ironic that these same sons of Israel who had received an abundance of blessings from the Lord are now facing punishment: ... הָיָה אֶנְכִי מַעֲיֵק תַּהְתִּיבָם (see, *I make totter under you ...*, 2:13a–16a). In addition, the tension that exists between the Lord and his people is emphasised when he states, *you only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities* (3:2a–b). It is noteworthy that this for the first time reveals the intimate nature of the relationship. However, far from using this as a defence against the imposition of punishments, the Lord makes it clear that they would suffer chastisements precisely because of the closeness of the relationship.

Their relationship continues in this vein in 3:9. The people of Israel were asked to refrain from their iniquitous behaviour, nonetheless the Lord's exhortations go unheeded. The Lord laments that *they did not know how to do what was right* (3:10a–b) and *they who are storing up violence and extortion in their palaces* (3:10d). These verses contain sarcasm about the fact that those who do not know how to do the right thing are experts in doing wrong. Those causing such misery have gone beyond any understanding of right conduct. And so, the warning of the Lord in 3:2b takes the form of punishment in 3:11a–e, 3:12a–d and in 3:14a–15c. The situation in 3:11a–e is contradictory to the situation in 2:9a–e. Not only will the Lord not intervene to save the people, as he did in defeating the Amorites (2:9a–e) but in this case will facilitate the enemy (3:11a–e). The situation is no better in 3:12a–d and moreover, it worsens so that even the rescue is portrayed in a mocking way: *as a shepherd snatches from the mouth of the lion two shanks or a piece of an ear so the sons of Israel will be delivered*. The outcome of any attempted rescue will be rather shocking and could be compared to a sumptuous meal being served on a poisoned plate which could only result in near total disaster.

The fact that the Lord himself is to execute the punishments is a clear indication of the gravity of the situation. He vows to destroy their fine houses as well as the altars which they have dedicated to their false gods (3:14a–15c). Here the role of the Lord changes, from being that of the one who proclaims punishments, to that of the one who inflicts them. Previously this task was undertaken by an unidentified enemy: *an enemy all around the*

country, he will bring down from you your strength and your palaces will be plundered (3:11a–e). In short, Israel's refusal to heed the warnings and its persistence in practicing its wicked ways, such as oppression and violence, inevitably results in chastisements. Hardening their hearts, the people of Israel enjoyed a lavish lifestyle, while continuing to exploit the weak and ill-treat the poor. This lack of concern for the oppressed results in the Lord's warning of retributions.⁴⁴⁹

There would seem to be a level of inconsistency in the way the relationship which exists between the Lord and his people is depicted, firstly in 4:4a–5c and then in 4:5d. In the former, there would appear to be no threat of punishment, whereas in the latter the sarcasm inherent in the words of the Lord (details of this can be found in 5.2.3), suggests that relations between the Lord and his people have not improved. The tone in the Lord's voice indeed reflects a disdain for and rejection of their acts. The statement this way you loved it (4:5d) not only confirms that this is not the kind of behaviour desired by the Lord, but also implicitly demands of the people to seek what he longs for. Since no specific punishment is pronounced, it is possible to conclude that the focus is on the relationship between them and not on chastisements. The Lord uses sarcasm as a means of counselling his people against their evil behaviour and of encouraging them to conform to his wishes. He, in scornful tones, invites them to go to Bethel and sin and to go to Gilgal and sin even more. Also, it is the Lord who asks them to bring sacrifices. However, the purpose of all this is to effect a change in how the people live their lives. Though the folly of their religious activities is exposed, there is no specific indication of what it is the Lord really expects of them. Nevertheless, from the Lord's comments on their false practices, it can be deduced that renewal is the desired outcome.

Confirmation that the people of Israel refused to turn away from their evil ways comes in the form of the catalogue of punishments as outlined in 4:6a–b, 7a–8c, 9a–b, 10a–c and 11a. This is detailed in section 5.2.4 of this thesis. The recurring statement, וְלֹא־שָׁבְתֶם עָדִי (*yet you did not return to me*, 4:6c, 8d, 9c, 10d, 11e) leaves little doubt as to the stubbornness of the people and their unwillingness to return to the Lord. The punishments inflicted on them were in fact an attempt at encouraging them to do just that. Thus, the Lord is portrayed as

⁴⁴⁹ See also chapter five of this thesis, §5.2.2 and 5.2.4.

one who makes repeated and earnest efforts to win back his people. This is a caring Lord awaiting their return from their sinful ways. However, having turned their face against the Lord, they have squandered the many opportunities provided to soften their heart and to accept the error of their ways (4:6a–11f). It is possible to sense the disappointment felt by the Lord when he declares, לָכֵן כֹּה אַעֲשֶׂה-לָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל (*therefore, thus, I will do to you, Israel*, 4:12a–b). Accordingly, relations are strained between the Lord and his people and communication becomes more tense.

In unit 5:3b–f, a decline is predicted: *the city that goes forth with a thousand will be left with a hundred, and that which goes forth a hundred will be left with ten, for the house of Israel*. This warning suggests that the Lord, who had defeated the Amorites (2:9a–e) and delivered them from Egypt (2:10a–10c), is unwilling to intervene further to save his people. Not only that, but he has predicted the scale of the disasters, which are set to be befall them.

Previously, he was portrayed as the one who warns and acts as judge and administrator of punishments, whereas in 5:4a–b the Lord is seen as an admonisher: *seek me and live* (דְּרֹשׁ־נִי וְחִי). Certainly, in contrast to the dire warnings and serious consequences previously predicted, this is a very welcome exhortation. The advice, דְּרֹשׁ־נִי, is to be read together with the recurring statement of the Lord, וְלֹא־שָׁבְתֶם עָדִי (*yet you did not return to me*) in 4:6a–11f. The contrasting messages convey perfectly how much the Lord longed for them to make amends.

In addition, the call to *seek me and live* is simultaneously emphatic and emotional. Emphatic, in that it emphasises that there is no other way for them, but to turn back to seek the Lord in order to escape any pending punishments. The emotion inherent in the words spoken hints at a certain intimacy and reflects the Lord's passion for his people. Even given their stubbornness and reluctance to return to the Lord, it is impossible for him to abandon them, as evidenced in his exhortation in 5:4a–5e. However, the people did not mend their misguided ways, detesting anyone declaring justice and truth (5:10a–d) and continuing to trample on the poor (5:11b–c). Therefore, the Lord angrily states in 5:12a–c *I knew your transgressions were many and your sins were numerous*. Though, no precise punishment is declared, this statement by the Lord is a serious warning to the wicked to abandon their sinful ways and a reminder that nothing is hidden from him. Accordingly the circumstances

of the lamentation and wailings as described in 5:16b–17b, yet again confirm the failure on the part of the people to repent. The assertion, *כִּי־אָעֱבֹר בְּקִרְבְּךָ* (*for I pass through your midst*) in 5:17b is further evidence that the Lord himself would be the one carrying out the punishments.

The relationship between the Lord and the people of Israel seems contradictory in 5:21a–27a. On the one hand it appears that they had sought the Lord as they brought him offerings and sacrifices. On the other hand, the responses of the Lord, *I hate, I scorn, I take no pleasure, I do not listen* (5:21a–23b) indicate displeasure on his part. In contrast to 4:4a–5f, the Lord states clearly, that what is expected of them is more than empty outward expressions of sacrifice that lack an inner sense of justice and righteousness. Without a desire on the part of the people to repent and act justly, these offerings could only be seen as an affront to the Lord. The seriousness of the conflict between them is exposed further when the Lord asks *did you bring me sacrifices and offering for forty years in the wilderness, house of Israel?* (5:25a–b).⁴⁵⁰ In 5:26a, the Lord sarcastically condemns their act of seeking false idols – *you carried Sakkuth your king and Kaiwan*. The earlier assertion of the Lord, *I brought you out from the land of Egypt and led you forty years in the wilderness* contrasts with the declaration that he will now exile his people beyond Damascus (5:27a). It is to be noted that the Lord himself will execute the sentence, unlike before, when it was an unidentified third party who took responsibility for putting it into effect (4:3), although he had sworn an oath against Israel.

The mounting tension between the Lord and his people is revealed once more in 6:8a–e where for the second time the Lord swears an oath against them. With further punishments awaiting them, even their own destruction is predicted in 6:9a–11c. Then 6:12c–d confirms that they have not done what the Lord commanded – *you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood*. It is the disregard for the Lord that has brought these punishments upon them. The conversation in 6:13c that takes place between the people, *did we not capture Karnaim for ourselves by our own strength?*, attests a pride hated by the Lord (6:8c). This reveals a conceited and self-opinionated people who have forgotten that it was the Lord who saved them from the Amorites and brought them out of slavery.

⁴⁵⁰ de Regt, “Discourse Implications of Rhetorical Questions in Job, Deuteronomy and the Minor Prophets,” 63–64.

The Lord's response to this rejection is to announce that he will raise up a nation against them, *for, behold, I am going to raise up against you a nation and they shall afflict you* (6:14a–e). The extent of the conflict between the Lord and his people is highlighted in 6:13a–14f. The warning from the Lord not only reveals the Lord's antipathy towards their attitude regarding their own power, but also acts as a reminder of his omnipotence and carries the implication that failure to return to him will end in disaster.

The engagement between the Lord and his people is vividly portrayed in the five visions. Accepting the intercessions of the prophet, the Lord twice revokes his decision to punish his people. The words of the Lord *לֹא תִהְיֶה* (*it shall not be*) in 7:3b and *גַּם־יִהְיֶה לֹא תִהְיֶה* (*it also shall not be*) in 7:6b, testify to this. The remarkable statement *נָחַם יְהוָה עַל־זֹאת* (*the LORD repented for this*) in 7:3a and 7:6a, confirms his decision not to proceed with the planned punishments even though there is nothing in the text to suggest that the sons of Israel have repented. However, this decision of the Lord eases the tension. It not only brings relief to the people, but it also serves to highlight the Lord's concern for them.

The situation changes dramatically in the third, fourth and fifth visions, as does the tone of the Lord's voice, as he ominously pronounces: (i) *behold! I set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel* (third vision), (ii) *the end has come upon my people Israel* (fourth vision), (iii) *smite the capital that the thresholds will shake and shatter them on the head of all of them and I will kill the remainder of them with the sword* (fifth vision). It is interesting that the Lord uses the expression *my people Israel*, in both the third and the fourth visions. Referring to the people, thus, conveys his passion and concern for them and acts as a reminder of the words spoken earlier in 3:1 *you only have I known of all the peoples of the earth*.⁴⁵¹ However, the omission of any such expression from the fifth vision is a clear indication that this bond has been weakened by the continuance of their offences.⁴⁵² Undoubtedly, a harsh judgement is imminent. The people spurned the generosity of the Lord and showed contempt for his forgiveness. Without showing any signs of repentance, they continued with their wrongdoing and unjust behaviour. More specifically, they persisted in

⁴⁵¹ See the discussion on the term *my people Israel* in Thang, "The Theology of the Land in Amos 7–9," 79–82.

⁴⁵² Schart, "The Fifth Vision of Amos in Context," 53.

their deceit and exploitation, all the while trampling on the poor and the needy (8:4b–6c). Given this situation, the Lord, for a third time, swears an oath against them, this time swearing by the pride of Jacob (8:7a) to withdraw his offer of forgiveness.

Importantly, among the punishments announced is that of famine in 8:11c–f. In this context, famine does not refer to a want of bread and water, but rather to a longing for the word of the Lord. Its absence indicates that communication between the Lord and the people of Israel has ceased. Consequently, huge tension enters their relationship, causing the people untold trauma. The Lord himself will administer the punishment. This is made clear in the following verses from the fifth vision (9:1a–4d): *I will kill the remainder of them with the sword* (9:1g), *my hand will haul them out* (9:2b), *I will bring them down* (9:2d), *I will search out* (9:3b), *I will take them* (9:3c), *I will command the serpent* (9:3e), *I will command the sword* (9:4b), and *I will set my eye upon them for evil* (9:4d).⁴⁵³ The judgement will be severe and the scale of punishment quite shocking. Nobody will be beyond the reach of the all-powerful Lord.

Notwithstanding all of this, a note of optimism is sounded when the Lord declares that he will not destroy the house of Jacob completely (9:8c). A remnant will be left, thereby allowing for the possibility that his people could be saved from the impending disaster. The sinners will perish: *all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword* (9:10a). The words in 9:14a–15c attest the gradual exclusion of the conflict and the restoration of the bond between the Lord and his people. Most significant is the change in the role of the Lord from the executor of judgement to the bestower of blessings. The Lord himself is the active agent who reinstates, repairs and reconstructs, as the words of the Lord confirm: *I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, I will repair their breaches, I will raise up its ruins, I will rebuild it as in the days of old, I will turn the captivity of my people Israel, I will plant them upon their land*.

⁴⁵³ Paas notices how the changing roles are reflected in the communication strategies. He points out that the judgement scene itself completely changes its character when the Lord accepts full responsibility as inflictor of punishment on Israel. See Paas, “Seeing and Singing,” 274.

8.2.1 Summary

The Lord–people of God relationship can be summarized as follows:

- The relationship is remarkable for the level of intimacy that exists between the Lord and his people. Nevertheless, because of their rejection of the Lord's commands this intimacy can be viewed to be one-way only.
- Despite the Lord's wish for his people to uphold justice and righteousness, to refrain from oppression and exploitation of the poor and the needy and from worshipping false gods, they repeatedly engaged in unjust acts. On account of this, in order to persuade them to turn back from these evil ways, punishments were inflicted on them.
- A significant aspect of the engagement was that the divine admonitions were intended to be restorative rather than punitive. The people's rejection of the divine intervention results in an ending of any communication between them and the Lord as famine for the word of the Lord.
- Because of the behaviour of the people it is legitimate for the Lord to end the relationship between them. Nevertheless, their stubbornness has not diminished his desire to bestow his benevolence on them. As the Lord has always considered them as his own, it was impossible for him to abandon them. *My people Israel, you only have I known of all the families of the earth.* This is confirmed by the remarkable change in the role of the Lord in the final section of the book. From one who appears as the proclaimer and the administrator of punishments, he becomes the one actively engaged in ending the captivity of the people and in reinstating, repairing and restoring Israel, to its former glory.
- Whether or not the people of Israel repented is not specifically referred to in the text. Ultimately, the Lord's passionate love for Israel is so great that all past iniquities are forgiven.

8.3 THE LORD–FOREIGN NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

Besides places where Israel and Judah are mentioned throughout the text, a number of other nations and places are also spoken of. Unlike Israel and Judah, none of these is addressed directly. However, to better understand the seriousness of the communication between the

Lord and Israel and between the Lord and Judah, it is necessary to consider what he says when speaking of the foreign nations, an account of which is given below.

The Lord's engagement with the foreign nations begins with his declaration against Damascus. Among various other punishments he sends down fire to destroy their palaces (1:4a) in retribution for crimes committed. Other nations suffer similar chastisements. Fire is brought down on Gaza (1:7a), Tyre (1:10a), Edom (1:12a), Ammon (1:14a) and Moab (2:2a). Their strongholds of power and their kings will be destroyed: the house of Hazael (1:4a), the palaces of Ben-Hadad (1:4b), the gate bars of Damascus (1:5a), the inhabitant of Aven (1:5b), the holder of the sceptre in Beth-Eden (1:5c), the inhabitant of Ashdod (1:8a), the holder of the sceptre in Ashkelon (1:8b), the palaces of Keriath (2:2b), the rulers of Moab (2:2c–3b). The people too will suffer: the people of Aram will be deported to Kir (1:5d), and the remnant of the Philistines will perish (1:8c). At no stage does the Lord communicate directly with any of these nations, he speaks only about them and the outrages perpetrated by them and the resulting consequences. The severity of the punishment inflicted will be in accordance with the seriousness of the transgressions. These are detailed in section 3.2.1 of chapter 3 on Amos 1:3–3:2 in this dissertation. Not a single expression that would point to the existence of any positive aspect in the relationship between the Lord and these nations is found in the text.

The reference to the foreign nations further appears in 3:9 where Ashdod and Egypt are called to be the observers of the oppressions that took place in Samaria. This indeed is a shameful experience for Israel. Additionally, by drawing attention to the fire and brimstone, which was sent down on Sodom and Gomorrah, Israel is left in no doubt as to what they could expect. In unit 6:2a–d attention is drawn to a number of powerful foreign cities. The Lord commands the sons of Israel to travel to Calneh, Hamath and Gath⁴⁵⁴ to see for themselves the devastations that have been wreaked on these kingdoms. The rhetorical questions asked of them *are they better than these kingdoms? Or their borders greater than your borders?* (6:2e–f) act as a stern warning as to what they might anticipate.⁴⁵⁵ The lesson to be learned from these references to the downfall of these former strongholds is that Israel

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. Josh 13:3; 1 Sam 5:7–10; 6:17.

⁴⁵⁵ Daniel Timmer, *The Non-Israelite Nations in the Book of the Twelve: Thematic Coherence and the Diachronic-Synchronic Relationship in the Minor Prophets*, BibInt 135 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 50–51.

will suffer no less a fate at the hands of the all-powerful Lord. The mention of Egypt, and more precisely the subsided Egyptian Nile (8:8f and 9:5g), is intended to alert Israel to the severity of the punishment awaiting it, with the rhetorical questions in 9:7d–f revealing the seriousness of the situation. The sons of Israel are reminded, yet again, that their position as the chosen people does not confer on them any special privilege, *are not you and the Cushites all the same to me?*⁴⁵⁶ Indeed, the Lord makes clear that his concern is not exclusively for Israel, but for other nations also, *did I not bring Israel from Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor, and Aram from Kir?*

8.3.1 Summary

The engagement between the Lord and the foreign nations can be summarized as follows:

- A number of nations are mentioned in the book and often these nations have committed offences and on various occasions their violent acts are particularly gruesome (1:3a–2:3c). The Lord passes judgement on these foreign nations and it is significant that the Lord never directly addresses any of them but only speaks indirectly about them.
- However, regarding Israel and Judah it is clear from the nature and constancy of the communication between them and the Lord that there exists a great level of intimacy in their relationship.
- A number of nations appear at a level of comparison. By referencing Sodom, Gomorrah, Calneh, Hamath and Gath, the subsided Egyptian Nile and the pestilence that had ravaged Egypt, the people of Israel are reminded of the scale of the catastrophe that is about to befall them. Ashdod, and Egypt are summoned as witnesses of Samaria's wicked doings.
- The reference to the migration of Philistines from Caphtor and Aram from Kir and the comparison with Cushites suggests that the special status conferred on Judah and Israel

⁴⁵⁶ For various interpretations of this comparison with Cushites, see Regina Smith, "A New Perspective on Amos 9:7a 'To Me, O Israel, You are Just like the Kushites'," *JITC* 22 (1994): 36–47; Ettien Koffi, "Theologizing about Race in Study Bible Notes: The Case of Amos 9:7," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 57 (2005): 157–67, discusses from a theological viewpoint. Knut Holter, "Being Like the Cushites: Some Western and African Interpretations of Amos 9:7," in *New Perspectives on Old Testament Prophecy and History: Essays in Honour of Hans M. Barstad*, ed. Rannfrid I. Thelle, Terje Stordalen and Mervyn E.J. Richardson, VTSup 168 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 306–18, asserts that in interpretive strategies context should and does matter.

does not ensure them any superiority, nor does it safeguard them from being judged about their own actions. Rather, being specially chosen, they have a greater responsibility to uphold this intimate relationship by observing the message of the Torah.

8.4 THE READER-ORIENTED PERSPECTIVE

This part intends to follow the development in the role of the Lord from the viewpoint of the text-immanent reader who, from the beginning, is a witness to all that is happening in the text. To this end, I will analyse the interactions between the various characters with the aim of determining to what extent the text-immanent reader is influenced by the communication by the Lord, to the Lord and about the Lord, or lack of such, between them. The areas to be reviewed are the engagements between (i) the Lord and the prophet, (ii) the Lord and the people of God (iii) the Lord and the foreign nations. This section is concluded by citing instances of the reader-oriented structure which are to be found in the text.

8.4.1 The Lord–Prophet Engagement

(i) The evolving relationship between the Lord and the prophet draws the attention of the text-immanent reader.

At the beginning of the text, the text-immanent reader learns of a vision of Israel, which had been received by Amos, a shepherd from Tekoa (1:1c). However, he is not given any further information about the vision. In 1:2a–e, Amos says that the Lord roars, utters his voice from Jerusalem, the shepherds' pastures mourn and the Carmel dries up. Still, no explanation of the vision is provided for the text-immanent reader, rather it is more of an abstract visualisation of the Lord. Even the precise nature of the relationship between the Lord and the prophet is concealed for the text-immanent reader.

However, the situation changes in 3:7a–c where the Lord–prophet relationship is revealed to be much deeper than it originally appeared. This is confirmed when he learns that the Lord would make his intentions known to the prophet before doing anything. Nevertheless, this bond does not excuse the prophet from proclaiming the divine message when it comes to him. He realizes that the prophet is merely a mouthpiece: the word is not his own, and he must not resist speaking it. The text-immanent reader appreciates that when the prophet pronounces judgements, warnings of punishments and divine oaths against Israel, as

opposed to promises of hope and prosperity, he does so at great personal risk. He recognizes another significant development in the Lord–prophet relationship in 7:1a–6c (the first and second visions) when he sees how the Lord is willing to accede to the pleadings of the prophet. This is further proof that a close and enduring union has been firmly established, one with a degree of mutual understanding.

(ii) The text-immanent reader recognises the prophet’s witness to the word of the Lord and his intercessions.

The confrontation between Amos and Amaziah which arose over the prophet’s prediction regarding the King and the people of Israel is a perfect illustration of the closeness of the relationship between the Lord and the prophet (7:10a–17f). Mindful that it is the prophet’s duty to proclaim the word of the Lord, the attempts by Amaziah to intimidate Amos are doomed to fail. Rather than preventing him from prophesying at Bethel they serve only to strengthen his resolve to fulfil his mission. He is determined to resist Amaziah’s challenges and to fearlessly carry out the Lord’s command to go and prophesy to his people Israel (7:15a–d). For the text-immanent reader, the effort to silence Amos is reminiscent of previous orders made against the prophets by the people of Israel (2:12b–d). This leaves open to speculation as to whether or not Amaziah too, like Israel, will be held to account for these transgressions against the Lord. The answer, in the affirmative, comes in 7:17b–f, with conformation being provided in 9:4a, leaving no room for doubt. There will no hiding place. It is made clear that all transgressors, without exception, will be chastised.

Noticing that, after the second vision, the prophet no longer intercedes on behalf of Israel, it is left open to the text-immanent reader to wonder if he himself should take on this particular role. It is clear that, despite the Lord having twice relented when requested to do so, the people of Israel continued to defy him, trying his patience to the limit. Given all this, the text-immanent reader is in conflict about the appropriateness of asking the Lord to once again show mercy.

(iii) The power of the Lord as perceived by the text-immanent reader.

The text-immanent reader learns that the people of Israel have engaged in idolatrous practices (2:8a–b, 5:26a–b, 8:14a–g) and futile religious ceremonies (4:4a–5d, 21a–23b). This all-pervasive corrupt and treacherous conduct will not be tolerated by the Lord, who

vowed to destroy not only the perpetrators of these betrayals, but also their altars and sanctuaries (3:14b–d, 9:1a–f). Those who challenged the Lord’s power are shown to be weak and powerless, with their rulers crumbling under the wrath of the Lord (1:5b–c, 8a–b, 15a; 2:3a–b, 15a–16a; 4:2b–3c; 5:3b–f; 6:1a–d, 7a–c). Likewise, their false idols are unmasked and shown to be lifeless, insignificant objects devoid of any power or influence. The image of Sakkuth and Kaiwan being carried is in stark contrast to that of the Lord carrying Israel out of slavery (5:26a–b). Also, worshipping the god Dan, trusting Samaria, and venerating at the shrine of Beersheba are declared to be futile exercises (8:14a–g), with the omnipotence of the Lord coming into sharp focus in all three prophetic descriptions (4:13a–g; 5:8a–9b; 9:5a–6e).

Great emphasis is placed on the expression *יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ* (*the LORD is his name*, 4:13g; 5:8f; 9:6e). For the text-immanent reader this could suggest that the Lord stands above all the other gods. He has dominion over the whole world, with the extent of his power being clearly illustrated, where it is stated: (i) he strides on the heights of the world (4:13f), (ii) he turns day to night and darkness to light (4:13e; 5:8c), (iii) he has control over the land and the sea (5:8; 9:6b–d), (iv) he builds his mansions in the heavens and his vault on the earth (9:6a). The expression *יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ* was never used with the intention of praising the Lord. Rather, it was to caution Israel to avoid wicked ways, and to highlight that the power of the Lord is greater than any other. No earthly power can exceed that of the Lord and this realization leaves the text-immanent reader in the knowledge that, as is the case with Israel, no-one can escape the all-seeing power of the Lord (9:2a–4d).

8.4.2 The Lord–People of God Engagement

(i) The position of the text-immanent reader in relation to the fractured relationship between the Lord and his people and likewise that among his people themselves.

Despite being forewarned (3:2a–b, 14a; 4:12a–e), and despite repeated punishments (4:6a–11f) the people of Israel remained obstinate, continuing to disobey the Lord, and refusing to turn back to him. They chose to ignore the Lord’s command to seek him and live (5:4a–6b, 15a–c). The pronouncements in 2:4b, 6b (*I will not revoke the punishment*), 4:6a–11f (*yet you did not return to me*), 5:21a–27c (*I hate, I scorn your festivals...*), 6:8a–d (*I detest the pride of Jacob, I hate his palaces*) make clear that the relationship between the Lord and

Israel has been damaged. This is confirmed in 8:11a–f where the Lord declares that as the people have persisted in disobeying him, he will send a famine for hearing the word of the Lord; thus ending any attempt to persuade them to listen to his words. Likewise, 9:7a–f confirms for the text-immanent reader that Israel is no longer considered as the first of nations and cannot expect to be treated more favourably than other nations. The abuses of power such as corruption, exploitation, injustice, oppression, intimidation and broken agreements are widespread. The prophetic lamentation (5:1a–3f; 16a–17c), the prophetic sorrow (5:18a–20d; 6:1a–2f) and the divine oath (4:2a–3d; 6:8a–e; 8:7a) allow the text-immanent reader to become aware of the seriousness of Israel's rejection of the Lord. Despite the fact that the Lord twice responded favourably to the intercessions of the prophet and withheld punishment, Israel persisted in its evil ways, something for the text-immanent reader to ponder. He realizes that Israel spurned the opportunity to receive pardon from the Lord by seeking good and rejecting evil. In spite of the stubbornness of the sons of Israel and their rejection of the Lord, the text-immanent reader retains a vision of hope that justice will prevail among them and they will once again turn to the Lord.

(ii) The passion of the Lord for his people as perceived by the text-immanent reader.

The concern shown by the Lord for his people points to the closeness of the relationship between them. At first, this relationship may appear as being an impersonal one in which the Lord admonishes Israel for not having responded positively to his exhortations, giving repeated warnings of impending punishments. Whereas these are made against all of the nations, it is to Israel alone that the Lord speaks directly. The text-immanent reader becomes aware that there is a more intimate relationship between the Lord and Israel and the true intentions of the Lord become clear when he reminds them that he defeated the Amorite (2:9a–e) and brought his people out of Egypt (2:10a–b; 3:1e). He gave them prophets and Nazirites from their own people (2:11a–b). But they ordered the prophets not to prophesy and encouraged the Nazirites to neglect their duties and, by doing so, to reject and dishonour the Lord.

Yet, the Lord's concern for the people remained strong and, blessing them again with prophets (3:7a–c, 8a–d; 9a–b; 7:15a–d), he invited the people to amend their wicked ways. Out of his unending concern for his people the Lord even hears the intercessions of the

prophet and revokes his decision to punish them (7:3b, 6b). The expressions used in the Lord's communication with Israel *you only have I known of all the families of the earth* (3:2a), *seek me and live* (5:4b–c), *my people Israel* (7:8g; 8:2g), *go, prophesy to my people Israel* (7:15c–d), *all the sinners of my people shall die by the sword* (9:10a), *I will turn the captivity of my people Israel* (9:14a), bear witness to the Lord's affection for it.

Fire is the recurring theme in threats made by the Lord against all of the transgressors, with the exception of Israel (2:13a–16b). Fire suggests total destruction with nothing remaining. However, in Israel's case this would not be the intended result of the Lord's displeasure. Previously, it had been suggested that only scraps would remain (3:12a–d). But the text-immanent reader notes that a remnant would remain from which the people would arise and the kingdom would be restored (5:3d, 3f, 15d; 9:8c). It was not the intention of the Lord to use punishments to completely destroy the people of God. Rather, it was to encourage them to amend their ways. There was an ardent desire on the part of the Lord that Israel would refrain from engaging in conduct that was contrary to his commands and that they would turn back to him, where mercy and compassion awaited them.

(iii) The text-immanent reader observes the changing role of the Lord from being the administrator of punishment to the bestower of blessings.

Clearly, along with the Lord's admonitions and threats of disaster, there is something more significant being offered and a strong sense of the Lord's concern for his people can be detected. There is a noticeable change in the image of the Lord. At the beginning the roar of the Lord indicates that divine judgement is the dominant theme (1:2a–e). However, by the end as blessings and favours are bestowed on the people, the Lord's compassion and mercy are very much in evidence (9:11a–15c). The first promise made by the Lord is to rebuild the fallen booth of David. An earlier mention of it having fallen, never to rise again, i.e., the house of Israel (5:2a–e), dismayed the text-immanent reader. This feeling of dismay is replaced by one of elation at the prospect of it being restored to its former glory.

This is seen as a presage of the promises which are to follow, with warnings of punishment being replaced by promises of renewal. For example, the cities which had been plundered and destroyed will be rebuilt and restored. The Lord who had warned of famine and other chastisements now promises vineyards to provide them with wine and gardens to yield

produce in abundance. The Lord will free them from captivity and return them to their homeland from which they will never again be exiled. Happiness and joy will replace suffering and sadness. These promises demonstrate how caring, kind and loving the Lord is. He is portrayed as their liberator, rescuer, deliverer and protector rather than as their accuser and punisher as at the beginning.

However, there is no indication given as to how the Lord's benevolence was received by the people of Israel, or whether they accepted these unconditional promises of a new beginning. Even so, by being included in these promises, as is suggested by the words, אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ *said the LORD your God* – in the final clause of the book of Amos – one gets a sense of the joy, concern and security contained in these promises. They also confirm for the text-immanent reader that the aim of administering justice through punishments was not to cause suffering for its own sake, but to bring the people back to the Lord.

8.4.3 The Lord–Foreign Nations Engagement

The roar of the Lord, which is heard in the introduction to the book of Amos leaves the text-immanent reader in no doubt about how infuriated the Lord is by the crimes of Israel's neighbouring nations (Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab). He declares that he will send fire down on them and will not relent under any circumstances. From this the text-immanent reader learns that total destruction will occur and that there will be no survivors. There will be no compromise and nothing will go unpunished. The absence of any direct communication between the Lord and those against whom he is raging attests the fact that there is no close personal relationship between them. The text-immanent reader notes that there is no appeal for clemency, with the question of whether this also applies to the Lord's engagement with Israel and Judah arising. The following conclusions are drawn:

- The Lord passes judgement on Judah and Israel just as he did on the foreign nations, showing that they too will be held accountable for their conduct and will face divine judgement. However, when the Lord issues his threats against Israel, he addresses his people directly, giving the text-immanent reader an early indication that their relationship is of a different order, because it is one of mutual concern. It is on a higher level, one not seen between the Lord and the foreign nations. Despite this, Israel is initially unperturbed by the warnings, continuing to ignore them and in doing so, showing contempt for the Lord.

However, being aware of how sternly the Lord has warned the foreign nations and how resolute he is in his determination to deal severely with them, the text-immanent reader notes that this could be seen as cautioning the sons of Israel against any such complacency, with the text-immanent reader being similarly addressed. This means that the warnings of the predicted destruction apply to him as well.

- At first it is difficult to accept that the people of Israel, despite their unique position held in the affections of the Lord, would be liable to punishments as were the other nations. However, with special privileges and protection come duties and obligations that require full compliance. Failure to comply with these will result in severe chastisements.

From the stern warnings given to the nations and their potentially devastating outcomes, the text-immanent reader is left in no doubt that the Lord is all-powerful. No nation, no leader, no matter how strong, could survive the Lord's fury. Those intent on destruction would in fact suffer annihilation.

8.5 SENDER-READER COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE

Resulting from the mutual communication between the Lord and the other characters, namely (i) the Lord and the prophet, (ii) the Lord and the people of God and (iii) the Lord and the foreign nations, communication between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader becomes evident in the book.

The very first verse of the text, which evidently belongs to the text-immanent author, gives a significant role to the text-immanent reader. This role is one with a reader-oriented function in regard to the development of the aspect of time. He learns of the words of the prophet Amos at a time two years before the earthquake, which occurred during the reign of King Uzziah of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel. However, there is no further mention of King Uzziah anywhere else in the text. Information on King Jeroboam appears much later in 7:10a–11b. He wonders if Amaziah is quoting Amos accurately and if so, whether or not Amos has referred to the King's death or exile prior to this narrative. If he did not, why now is Amaziah being untruthful? Also, why does King David appear towards the end and not Uzziah or Jeroboam? In the context of all these unanswered questions the text-immanent reader becomes very much part of the text.

Corresponding to 1:1, 1:2 is also at the disposal of the text-immanent author. Here too, the involvement of the text-immanent reader increases, as it is unclear to whom he (Amos) is speaking and why. This situation continues in the prophecy against the nations, where the text-immanent author renders the speech of the Lord. However, no one is addressed directly by the Lord until he does so in 2:11. Due to this inadequate information much work has been left for the text-immanent reader to do, but not at an addressee level, because of the narrative *wayyiqtol*-form (וַיֵּאמֶר) in 1:2a. It is noticeable, however, that in 2:10 the position of the text-immanent reader changes to that of the addressee level. This is due to the presence of an anonymous second person plural (אַתְּכֶם), through which the text-immanent reader also receives the Lord's intervention. Consequently, he must not disobey the Lord. This is confirmed for him in 2:13 where, through the use of the syntactic now-moment construction (הִנֵּה), the text-immanent reader gains access to the text, where he is informed that the Lord intends to destroy the people of Israel because of their disobedience. However, as he is not addressed directly, unlike the people of Israel he does not receive any explicit warning from the Lord.

A series of rhetorical questions formulated in *yiqtol*-forms in the foreground realm give a prominent position to both the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader in unit 3:3a–8d. As already discussed in section 4.2.1⁴⁵⁷ the text-immanent author deals here with the issue of prophecy. Since the questions are not directed at anyone in particular, it is also open for the text-immanent reader to accept this call to prophesy. The reader-oriented function takes on a new dimension in 4:2 where the status of the text-immanent reader is lowered from the addressee level, and where he is indirectly compared to the cows of Bashan. The presence of the now-moment character of the text (כִּי הִנֵּה), allows the text-immanent reader to imagine what is about to take place (4:2–3). He learns of the punishments awaiting those cows of Bashan, but, on account of the lack of information he is uncertain as to the identity of the third person singular 'he' who drags them towards the Harmon and as to when this will happen. The reader-oriented function continues in 4:4–5 by reason of the now-moment character, formulated by a series of imperative verbal forms (בֹּאוּ, הִשְׁמִיעוּ, וְקִרְאוּ, וְהִבִּיאוּ, הָרְבוּ, פִּשְׁעוּ). Besides, as a result of the absence of an introductory formula, it is possible that the text-immanent reader is the 'you'-figure being referred to.

⁴⁵⁷ See page 86 of this thesis.

Although his position is diminished when it is firmly established at the end of the direct speech that the ‘you’-figure refers to the sons of Israel, the text-immanent reader is also the target of the sarcasm used in this unit where warnings about pointless religious offerings and unjust behaviour are delivered.⁴⁵⁸

Similarly, due to the now-moment character invoked by the *yiqtol* construction in 4:12, the text-immanent reader gains entry to the text and, being linked to the sons of Israel, he too is subject to the warning in 4:12e, לְקָרְאתָ אֶל־הָיָה (be prepared to meet your God). Being involved with the sons of Israel, he would inevitably have participated in their sordid practices. Indirectly then, he is being warned that the divine judgement would equally apply to him. Since the divine speech formula in 5:16a has not given any information on whom is being addressed, the text-immanent reader is more in focus in 5:17b. Therefore, given the miserable situation predicted in the lamentations and later in the prophetic woes (chapters 5 and 6), the text-immanent reader should consider the instructions of the Lord and, after witnessing the wrath of the Lord, should realize that it is prudent to stay silent (5:13b–c). Knowing this and having seen the rejection of the Lord by Israel, it can be concluded that the divine judgement is a fair response from the Lord. The now-moment construction (הַיָּה + פִּי) in 6:11a is parallel to the now-moment construction (הַיָּה + פִּי) in 4:2a and turns the text-immanent reader’s attention once more to the coming destruction. In 6:12c–d he learns of the reason for the impending divine punishment predicted in 6:11 and in 6:14a–c. From the words of the text-immanent author in 6:14d–f he receives further information on how the Lord is going to rise against the house of Israel.

The reader-oriented function is noticed once more with the inclusion of the now-moment construction *well then* (וְעַתָּה) in 7:16a where, though warnings are principally directed to Amaziah, the text-immanent reader learns that they are also meant for him. Thus, he is fully conscious of the dire consequences of rebelling against the Lord’s commands, a fate which is about to befall all those associated with Amaziah. Nevertheless, the text-immanent reader remains unsure as to whether or not the threat of annihilation and exile is still being considered. In 8:3c–e it is interesting to note the words of the text-immanent author, which

⁴⁵⁸ For a detailed explanation see §5.3.2 of this thesis on page 133.

makes known to the text-immanent reader the gravity of the words of the Lord – *the end has come upon my people Israel* (8:2g).

The rhetorical questions asked in 9:7, along with the הִנֵּה construction in 9:8 indicate that the communication from the Lord is aimed at the text-immanent reader. The realization that Israel will not be treated any more favourably than the foreign nations disturbs him, causing all hope to fade. In 9:15d attention is drawn to the expression אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (*said the LORD your God*) which uses a reader-oriented perspective. This is remarkable as this speech formula is unlike all other concluding divine formulas previously used. The use of the suffix second person singular and the indication that the warnings of punishments are being replaced by the bestowing of blessings, serve to highlight the difference. Even though, the suffix second person singular is identified as the people of Israel, and the text-immanent reader, by being part of them, indirectly benefits from the final promises made by the Lord. Along with the people of Israel, he comes to realize that the purpose of the Lord's exhortation was not only to warn the people but also to save them. In addition, the reader-oriented function in the development of the aspect of time is significant, with each reference to time allowing the text-immanent reader to participate more and more in the text. These temporal references are: *two years before the earthquake* (1:1c), *that day* (2:16a; 8:13a), *on the day of my inspection* (3:14a), *behold, days are coming upon you* (4:2b), *on that day* (8:9a; 9:11a), and *behold, the days are about to come* (8:11a; 9:13a).

The reader-oriented perspectives in the book of Amos can be summarized as follows:

- The book of Amos lays great emphasis on the text-immanent reader, thereby enhancing the communication in the book as a whole. There are many author-reader-oriented syntactic structures in the text which serve to locate the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader.
- The text-immanent reader is brought into the text either by the text-immanent author or by the prophet as part of the direct communication between the Lord and the people of Israel. Moreover, he is explicitly or implicitly addressed by either the prophet or the text-immanent author in the text-communication phase. In this way, he is drawn into the text, where he becomes directly involved.

- The people of Israel who are the direct addressees of the divine messages are often portrayed as flawed characters who receive many divine punishments. As the text-immanent reader is similarly addressed, he too will be held accountable. The destructions referred to are not confined to the people of Israel and it is essential that the text-immanent reader remains cautious.
- By witnessing all that is happening and by being aware of the actions of the characters in the text, such as the prophet Amos, Amaziah and the sons of Israel, and of the consequences of their actions, the text-immanent reader is conscious that he must always be on his guard and must learn from the past experiences of others.

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SUMMARY

What is this dissertation?

The present dissertation entitled “Communication and the Role of the Lord in Amos: Their Development and Their Implications for the Text-Immanent Reader” is a communication-oriented text-linguistic analysis of the book of Amos, with special focus being placed on the role of the Lord and its implications for the text-immanent reader. The analysis illustrates the part played by each of the characters in the communicative process in the book. Accordingly, the research question of this dissertation is formulated as: how profound and persuasive are the communication layers in the book of Amos in relation to the role of the Lord and what is the position of the text-immanent reader in this communication? The analysis examines the following:

- (i) The communication in the entire text: what communication layers are to be found in the text and how successfully do the text-syntax, text-semantic and text-pragmatic analyses explore the complexities and interconnectedness of the communication within the book of Amos?
- (ii) The communicative role of the Lord, who is the principal agent of and the central figure in the communication in Amos’ prophecy: what is communicated by the Lord, to the Lord and about the Lord and how does the relationship between the Lord and the other characters develop during the text-communication progresses?
- (iii) The position and the role of the text-immanent reader: where in the book can the text-immanent reader be found and how is he challenged, directly or indirectly as the text-communication progresses?

What methodology is employed in addressing the research question?

Since the main research question is predominantly text-oriented, this dissertation advocates the use of both a text-linguistic and a communicative approach.

The text-linguistic approach is taken from a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic viewpoint. The networking between the text-units in the book of Amos is remarkable and this interrelationship enhances the communication in the text. The text-linguistic analysis begins

with a translation of the Hebrew to English, with the clause divisions and the connections being presented within a hook-system.

The communication-oriented analysis views the entire text as communicative, with the speaker, the addressee and the characters being centrally involved. Also included in this, is the communication between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader. By means of these textual constructions, the comprehension of and engagement with the text is feasible. Using this framework of a text-linguistic analysis, the communication layers, interrelations, connections and movements in the book of Amos are explored with particular reference to the role of the Lord. The communication analysis is arranged in two parts. The first explains what communication takes place between the characters and, through this, the relationships between the Lord–prophet, the Lord–people of God and the Lord–foreign nations are analysed. The second phase, involves an examination of the reader-oriented structure of the book with the communication between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader being of special interest.

How are the chapters outlined in this dissertation?

Based on the aforementioned background to the study, the structure of the dissertation and a synopsis of each chapter is given in the following section.

Chapter 1: introduction

The first chapter offers information on:

- the research purpose: to study the communication in the book of Amos
- the research question: how profound and persuasive are the communication layers in the book of Amos in relation to the role of the Lord and what is the position of the text-immanent reader in this communication?
- the research methodology: a text-linguistic + communication-oriented exegesis
- the chapter outline: a short description of all the eight chapters in the dissertation
- the concluding remarks: these include a number of observations on the broader aspects of this research

Chapters 2–7: the analysis of Amos 1:1–9:15

Chapters 2–7 follow the same text-linguistic pattern as outlined below:

Each chapter begins with a syntax diagram with a working translation, followed by syntax, semantic, and pragmatic analyses and concluded with remarks pertaining to the role of the Lord.

Chapter 2: Amos 1:1–2

The words of Amos echoed in 1:2, יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן וְיִשְׁאָג וּמִירוּשָׁלַם יְתֵן קוֹלוֹ (*the LORD roars from Zion and and from Jerusalem he utters his voice*) elucidates the text-communication in this chapter. Amos neither suitably introduces the Lord, nor does he clarify why the Lord roars or what he utters. However, the depiction of the mournful scenes illustrates the way in which the communication is being received in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Amos 1:3–3:2

In this chapter, a series of prophecies reveals how a succession of nations are affected. First, the formula עַל (*for*) + שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּשָׁעֵי (*three transgressions*) + the name of the nation, is employed, and then immediately followed by the formula עַל (*for*) + אַרְבָּעָה (*four*) + the decision of the Lord לֹא אֶשְׁיבֶנּוּ (*I will not revoke it*). However, the impression is created that Israel has nothing to worry about and will be exempt from the judgement. Thus, it is interesting to observe how, following the pronouncement of the judgement against Judah, Israel finds itself in the same predicament. This unexpected communication, indicating a reversal of fortune for Israel, though shocking, is a significant part of the overall analysis of the chapter. Added to that, from a communication perspective, it is worth noting how Judah and the text-immanent reader, against whom this communication is also directed, are also affected by the judgement.

Chapter 4: Amos 3:3–15

Amos 3:1–8 consists of several rhetorical questions, all centred around the theme of entrapment, culminating in the issue of prophesy, אֲרִיָּה נִשְׁאָג מִי לֹא יִירָא אֶדְנֵי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר מִי לֹא (*a lion has roared, who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken, who will not prophesy?*). Because of this hidden trap that lies within the rhetorical questions, the

addressee is left with no other option but to accept the call to prophesy. This communication differs from that in the prophecies against the nations which appeared earlier in the text. Thus, the acceptance of the word of the Lord is once again emphasised through this progression of rhetorical questions in the communication process. It can also be concluded that enhancing the Lord's word will have far-reaching consequences as forewarned in 3:11–12, 14–15.

Chapter 5: Amos 4:1–12

A mixture of threat and sarcasm constitutes the communicative-setting in this chapter. The image פְּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן (*cows of Bashan*) is intended to hold up to ridicule the people being addressed. This metaphorical usage evokes the meaning behind the language of the text with successive scenes suggesting, for example, being lifted by בָּצֻנוֹת (*hooks*) and by בְּסִירוֹת דוּגָה (*fish-hooks*) and being transported. Contrasting scenes, such as where פְּרוֹת הַבָּשָׁן who once oppressed the poor (דָּלִים) and the needy (אֶבְיוֹנִים) and who now suffer the same fate themselves, serve to highlight the extent of the communication. The expression וְלֹא־שִׁבְתֶּם עָדִי (*yet you did not return to me*) is employed five times in the chapter (4:6c, 8d, 9c, 10d, 11e), which simultaneously alludes to the appeal to return to the Lord and the stubbornness of the sons of Israel. Consequently, a serious warning is issued (הַכּוֹן לַקְרָאת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ), and they must now prepare for an imminent encounter with the Lord. Implicitly, it is cautioning the text-immanent reader not to behave like the sons of Israel did.

Chapter 6: Amos 5:1–6:14

Chapter six abounds with negative scenes of קִינָה (*lamentation*) and הוֵי (*woe*). The day of the Lord (יּוֹם יְהוָה) is portrayed as being most dangerous and shrouded in deep darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ). The threats and punishments, more than ever before, include the possibility of death. Unquestionably, the images in this section are depressing. In the midst of such a gloomy situation, exhortations to seek the Lord and thus to have life (דַּרְשׁוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וְחַיּוּ) are heard. Moreover, it is proclaimed that the Lord is longing more for justice (מִשְׁפָּט) and righteousness (צֶדֶקָה) than for sacrifices (5:21–27). Thus, the communication in this chapter combines serious implications with rhetorical effectiveness. Moreover, the communicative situation is more than just a mirror for the

text-immanent reader, who not only witnesses everything that happens in the text, but who learns to read the text himself and to develop his response.

Chapter 7: Amos 7:1–9:15

This chapter largely deals with a series of five visions that are marked with numerous significant communication moments, most notably the Lord–prophet conversations in the visions. On foreseeing what was about to happen to Israel, Amos twice successfully intercedes on its behalf (אֲדַנְיָ יְהוָה סִלַּח-נָא, *Lord GOD, forgive now, please* in 7:2 and אֲדַנְיָ יְהוָה חַדֵּל-נָא, *Lord GOD, cease, please* in 7:5). On both occasions the Lord relents (לֹא תִהְיֶה, *it will not happen* in 7:3 and again in 7:6). However, there is an absence of any further intercessions in the subsequent visions. In the third vision, Amos, recognising the Lord's determination to proceed with the punishments, remains silent. The Lord appears with a plumb-line (אֶצְנָה) having made a firm decision not to relent לֹא-אֶסְיֶיף עוֹד (I will no longer pass over it). It is interesting to see how Amos is now fully engaged with the divine action as the Lord directs the dialogue. The narrative of the Amos–Amaziah confrontation (7:10–17), which includes reversals of fortune and notes of sarcasm, comes between the third and the fourth visions. The climax comes when Amaziah himself, who tried to prevent Amos from prophesying in Israel, now faces punishment, a dramatic fall for one who considered himself to be beyond reproach (7:17). For the text-immanent reader, these are serious moments of realisation and learning. The relentless stream of condemnations and punishments that ran from the very beginning of the book is suddenly replaced by blessings from the Lord and promises of brighter days ahead. Wonder is a sentiment felt at both the beginning and end of the book, but for very different reasons. At the beginning it is provoked by the Lord roaring in anger, whereas at the end it is brought about when the Lord, speaking in a much more gentle voice, promises an abundance of good things and a restoration of the fallen booth of David. The second person form in the expression אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (*said the LORD your God*) allows for serious engagement by the text-immanent reader.

Chapter 8: conclusion

This final chapter, a communication-oriented analysis, is a continuation of the text-linguistic analysis that deals with the various communication layers in the text. The

engagements between the Lord and the prophet, the Lord and the people of God and the Lord and the foreign nations are explored to determine the development in the role of the Lord in the text-communication. Added to this, a reader-oriented analysis is undertaken in order to elucidate the implications of the communication between the Lord and the characters from the perspective of the text-immanent reader. In addition, the analysis of the communication between the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader leads to a better understanding of the internal communication, allowing for an active interaction with the text while at the same time maintaining it in its original form.

The analysis shows that the inclusion of the rhetorical questions substantially enhances the text-communication in the book, as also do the great number of direct speeches, sarcasms, chiasms, lamentations, woes, vocatives and imperatives. The opportunity to engage with the text is made possible through the gaining of fresh insights into the internal communication, to which both the text-immanent author and the text-immanent reader greatly contribute. The level of the Lord–prophet, Lord–people of God and Lord–foreign nations engagements indicate that a significant development has occurred in the role of the Lord in the communication. For the text-immanent reader these interactions are both constructive and informative, while his location in the text, the extent to which he is involved and any changes undergone by him are elucidated during the communication between the various characters. Though the people of Israel are the direct recipients, the text-immanent reader, being in a similar addressee situation, is also closely involved in this communication.

What is innovative about this dissertation?

The book of Amos is one of the most fascinating and evocative texts in the Hebrew Bible. Though it is a short work consisting of nine chapters, there is no shortage of monographs and articles on this book and its theology, especially from a historical and literary point of view. Nevertheless, it is true to say that in the area of academic research a comprehensive analysis of the text-communication of the book, the role of the Lord and its implications for the text-immanent reader, has up until now not been afforded the recognition it deserves. Very little academic attention has been given either to the question of how the communicative elements are so adroitly employed in the book or of how the communication

is directed. Added to this, the role of the text-immanent reader vis-à-vis communication has been largely devoid of scrutiny. Therefore, this systematic study of the text-communication with special reference to the character Lord is intended to address this omission.

The general portrayal of the Lord the book of Amos presents, is that of a judging Lord with a plumb-line in his hand and with a roaring voice like that of a lion. The prophet Amos is considered to be an advocate for the voiceless and someone who tries to eradicate social injustices. However, a serious study of the book of Amos illustrates that there are other aspects to be analysed in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the text. In the book, there are numerous direct speeches highlighted with several divine speech formulas. Also found are provocative prophetic speeches which fail to garner responses from the recipients. The large discourse structures in the book are loaded with effective rhetoric that deepens the inner meanings, tensions and the complexities of the communication. The analysis discloses twists, turns, and reversals, which provide fascinating movements in the communication process. Diverse factors, such as the various dialogues within the visions, the rhetorical questions, the level of scorn, along with the prophetic lamentations and woes, as well as the swearing of oaths and the announcements of punishments, together display the wide range of the communication elements in this book. Throughout this body of work communication is very much to the fore.

To conclude, the book of Amos covers every aspect of the development in the role of the Lord. This progression is from the Lord, who roars in anger, to the Lord who blesses. The text contains communications about the Lord, to the Lord and by the Lord. Regarding the communication to the recipients, namely, the sons of Israel, it is emphatic and compelling and delivered with rhetorical effect. The text-immanent reader is also addressed both directly and indirectly in the communication from the character Lord, from the prophet, and from the immanent-author. Through the powerful communication-setting, a strong incentive to return to the Lord is provided and an opportunity to become informed opens up for the text-immanent reader and for the sons of Israel, the direct recipients. Many such moments occur in the book, though not always overtly. The book, which addresses the text-immanent reader through an anonymous 'you' at the beginning (2:10), also ends with an anonymous reawakening address in 'you' form (9:15). Thereby, the text communication in the book not only stimulates, but its implications endure. Realizing the text-dynamism inherent in the text,

I am greatly inspired by the communicative elements discernible in the book of Amos. The exercise of searching for different hidden communication layers within the book of Amos is both stimulating and fascinating. It is quite interesting to note that, as with Judah and Israel, the text-immanent reader is also challenged to pay heed, and that the now-moment communication aspect within the book continues to flow and develop. On a personal level, the communication embedded in the book of Amos remains a great source of inspiration and, therefore, capturing new dynamic aspects of communication and viewing them from different perspectives gives great excitement.

In keeping with “Understanding Society,” the motto of Tilburg University, which promotes active participation in and making a positive contribution to society, this study is an active engagement with the book of Amos through a number of communication strategies, thereby demonstrating means of finding, developing and transferring various reading possibilities that are beneficial for society in general. This dissertation thus seeks the development in the role of the Lord in the prophecy of Amos and sees the possible implications of such an engagement for society as a whole through the lens of the text-immanent reader who reads the text and, in doing so, begins to read himself and society. This strategy, which maintain an open-ended invitation for society to engage with the text, is perfectly sensible. In the book, the text-immanent reader is often found at the learning stage, while the communication between the characters in the text has progressed further. The reader-oriented instances in the text provide for him moments, which are both illuminative and educational. As the impact of the evocative role of the Lord becomes well understood, he is, at all times, well prepared for any challenge by the text-dynamism which is ever influential in society. This opens up a genuine now-moment, in which the real reader, without identifying with any particular character in the book, and respecting the integrity of the communication, engages with the text.